Northumbrian Suite

Folk Songs from Northern England

English Folk Songs

Ian David Coleman

1 Full Score

8 Violin I

8 Violin II

5 Viola

5 Cello

5 Bass

Extra Part - P3035841

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About the Music

Folk songs, of course, have a long and mysterious history. Their origins are unknown and they have come down to us mainly through an oral tradition, being passed from generation to generation. The north of England has an equally rich and colorful history, and many of the folksongs we have come to know and love are rooted in the ancient region of northern England and southern Scotland known as Northumbria. The three folksongs in this suite reflect a vibrant, wild and deeply historic region.

I. When the Boat Comes In

The arranger grew up in England knowing this folksong as the theme song to a BBC TV series popular in the 1970's. The catchy melody and lighthearted nature of the piece stuck with him over the years. This tune, with its lively dance-like rhythmic drive and melody characterized by some wide melodic leaps (which perhaps reflect the motions of the dancer?) is a great choice to open the suite. The north of England has had a long and turbulent relationship with the sea, and the words of this song are an encouragement to a small child to 'Dance to your Daddy when the boat comes in', because when the young child's father comes back from fishing in the North Sea, the child will 'have a little fishy on a little dishy'!

II. Dives and Lazarus

This ancient tune has been found in various forms and meters throughout England and Ireland. In this arrangement the tempo is slower and the arranger included a couple of moments where he presents the first line of another ancient folksong, "My Bonny Boy." The long lilting, plaintive melody seems to many to be strangely familiar even if they have never heard it before. Some, for example, may hear hints of 'The Star of County Down' in the flowing melodic lines. Perhaps because it has been found in so many variants throughout England and Ireland it has a place deep in our subconscious.

III. The Keel Row

The river Tyne runs through the north of England, and is a defining geographical feature of the Northumbrian landscape. This lively, sea shanty-like folksong is a traditional Tyneside boatman's song. It makes a perfect fast paced and jaunty piece to conclude this set. The arranger composed a catchy opening line that sets the mood for the two-part melody of the actual folksong to begin in m. 13. The opening idea and the actual folksong play back and forth throughout the piece, sometimes elongated and mixed together and sometime distinct from each other.

About the Composer

Growing up in Bristol, England, Ian David Coleman studied music composition and music education at Bath Spa University and the University of Exeter before coming to America to earn his Masters and Doctorate degrees at the University of Kansas. His music is performed nationally and internationally by a wide range of ensembles. The arranger enjoys the interactions that happen between the creator of the piece and those entrusted with realizing that piece into sound. He actively encourages and seeks commissions that allow for this sort of interaction, where the barrier between the music and the composer can be broken down and the ensemble and composer can become co-creators in the piece. As Chair of the Department of Music at William Jewell College in Liberty, Missouri, Dr. Coleman is constantly in contact with students who are exploring great art and who are trying to find out more about how that art can and should be brought to life. He also enjoys being in contact with local high school music directors and appreciates the work they do daily to pass on to the next generation a love for music.

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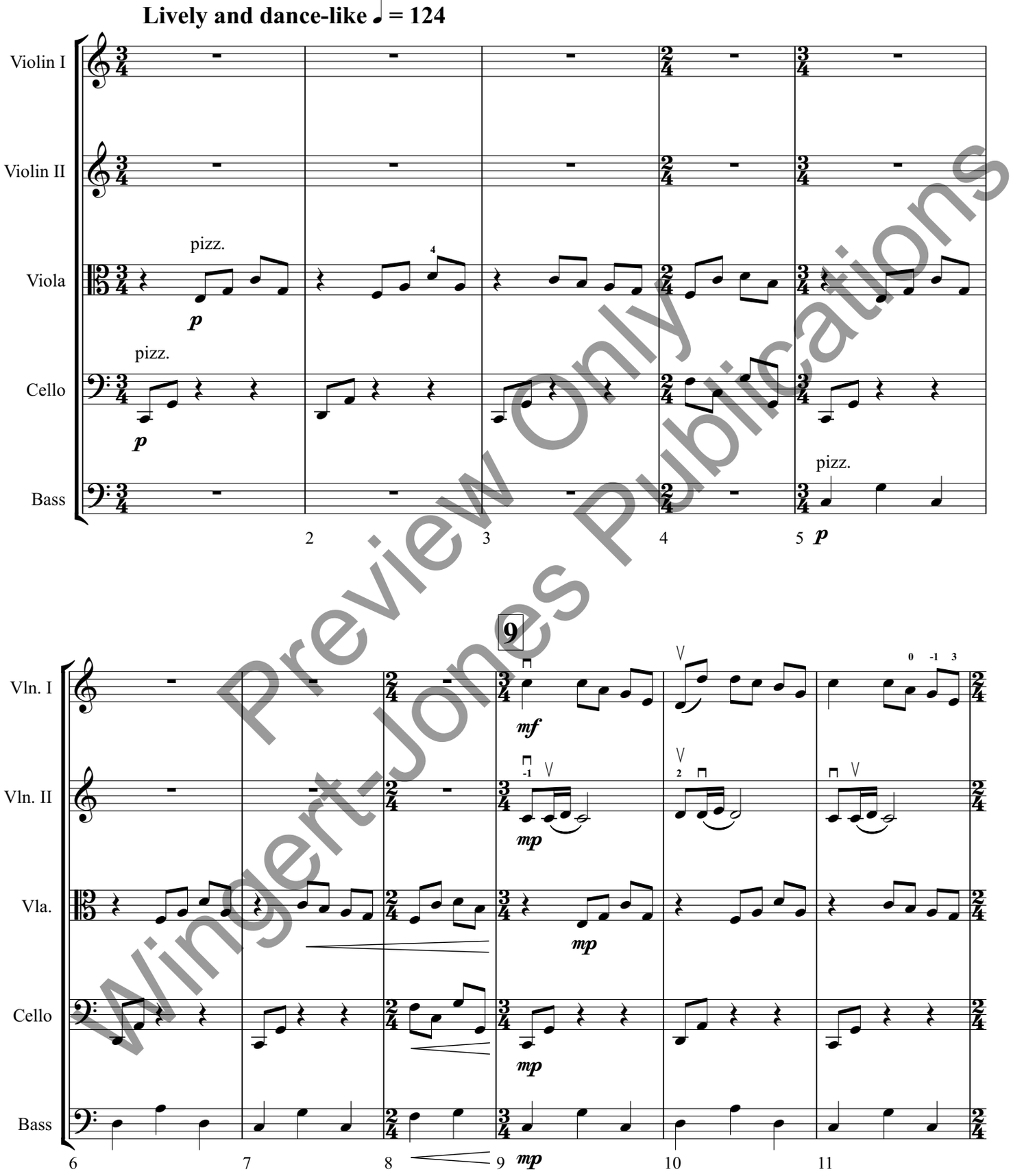
Duration 8:45
Mvt. I - 2:45
Mvt. II - 3:25
Mvt. III - 2:35

Northumbrian Suite

(Folks Songs from Northern England)

I. When the Boat Comes In

English Folk Songs
arranged by Ian David Coleman (ASCAP)



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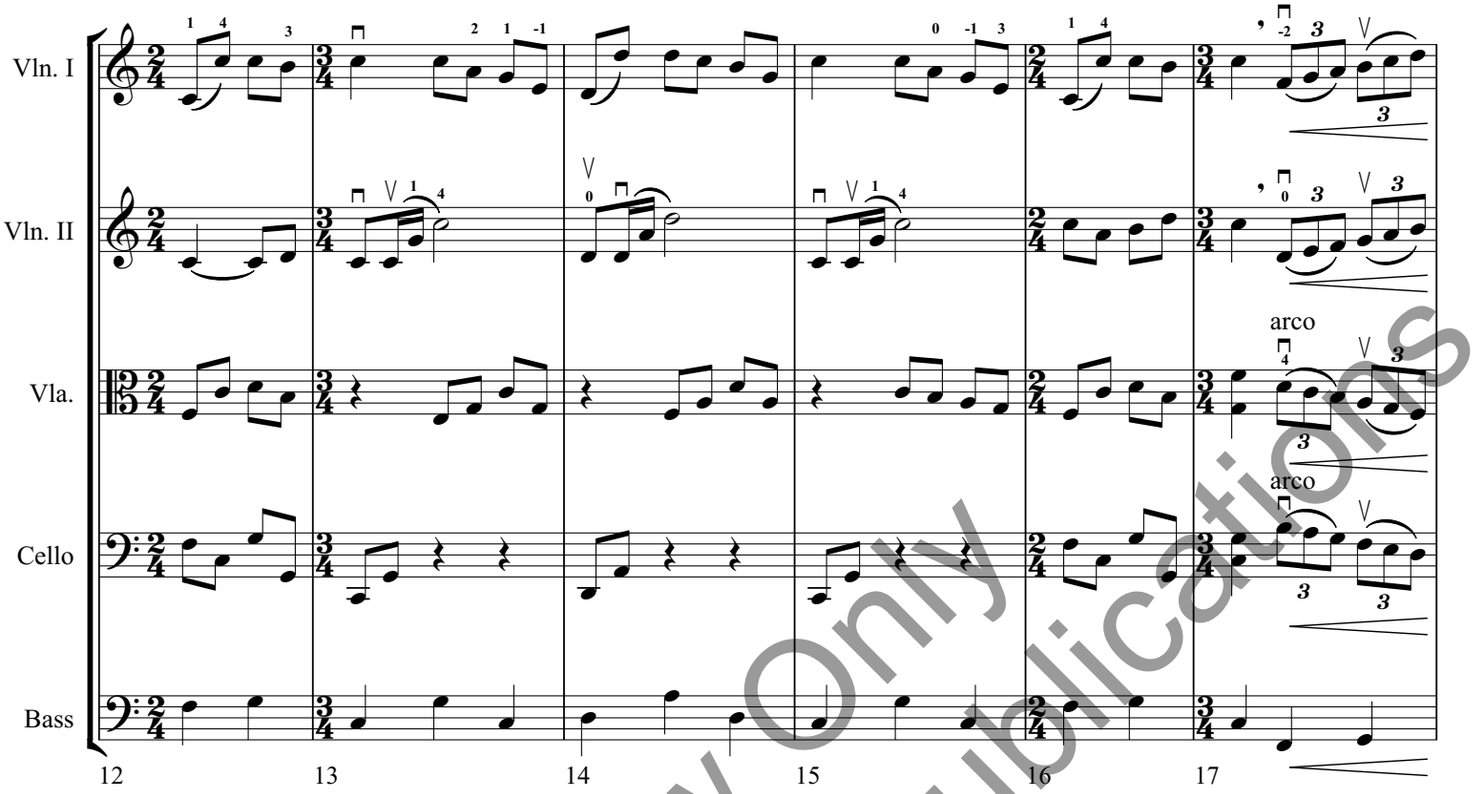

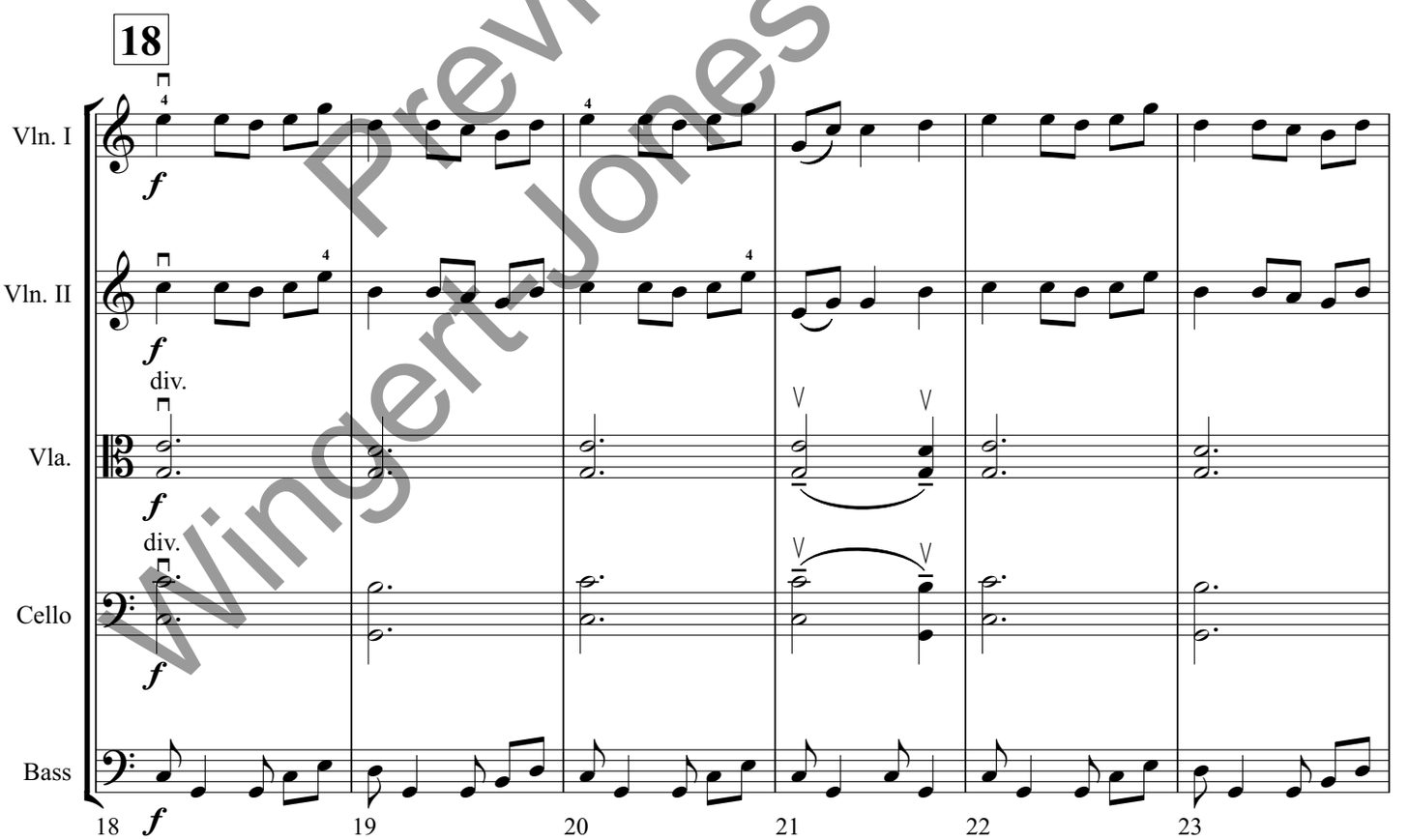

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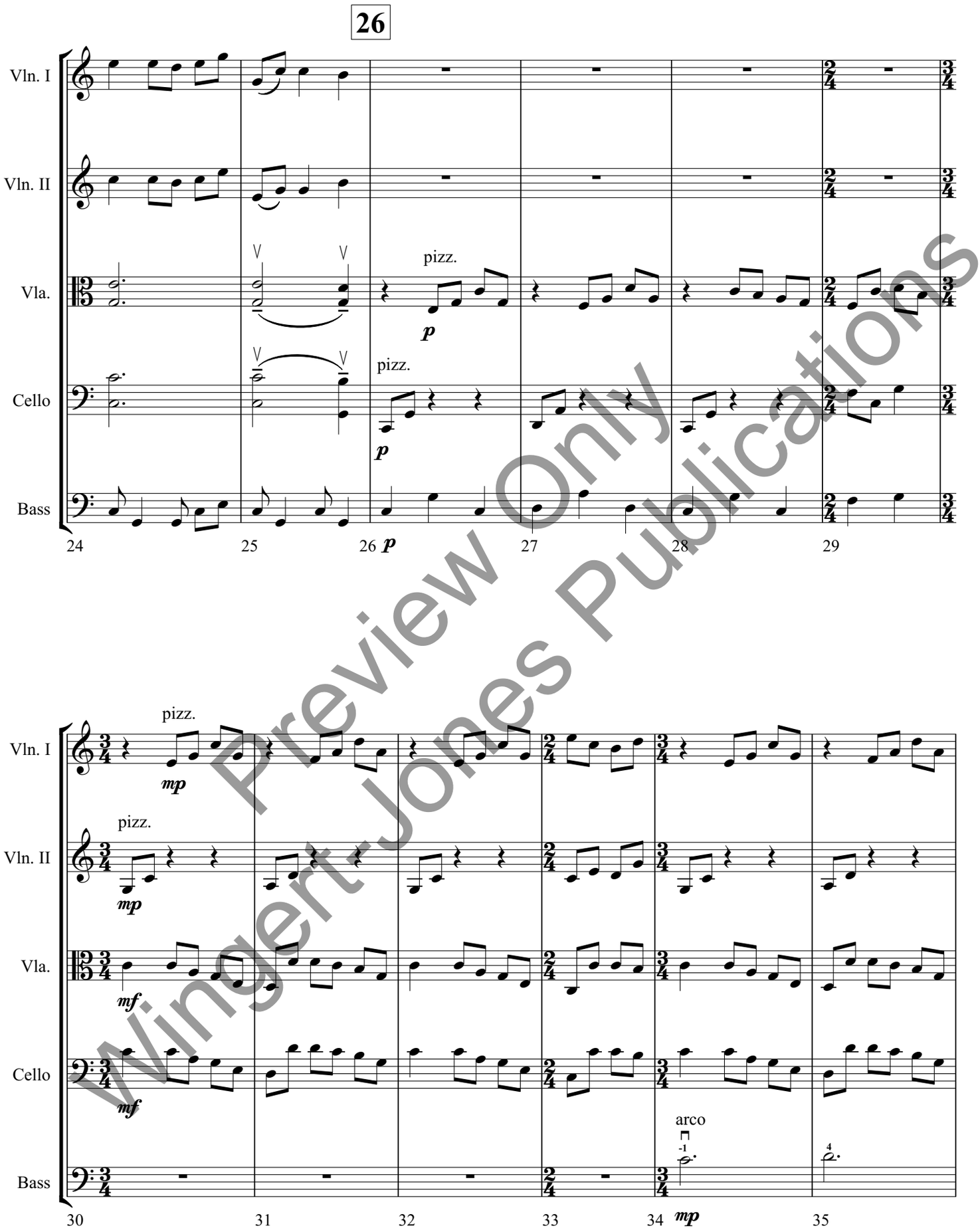

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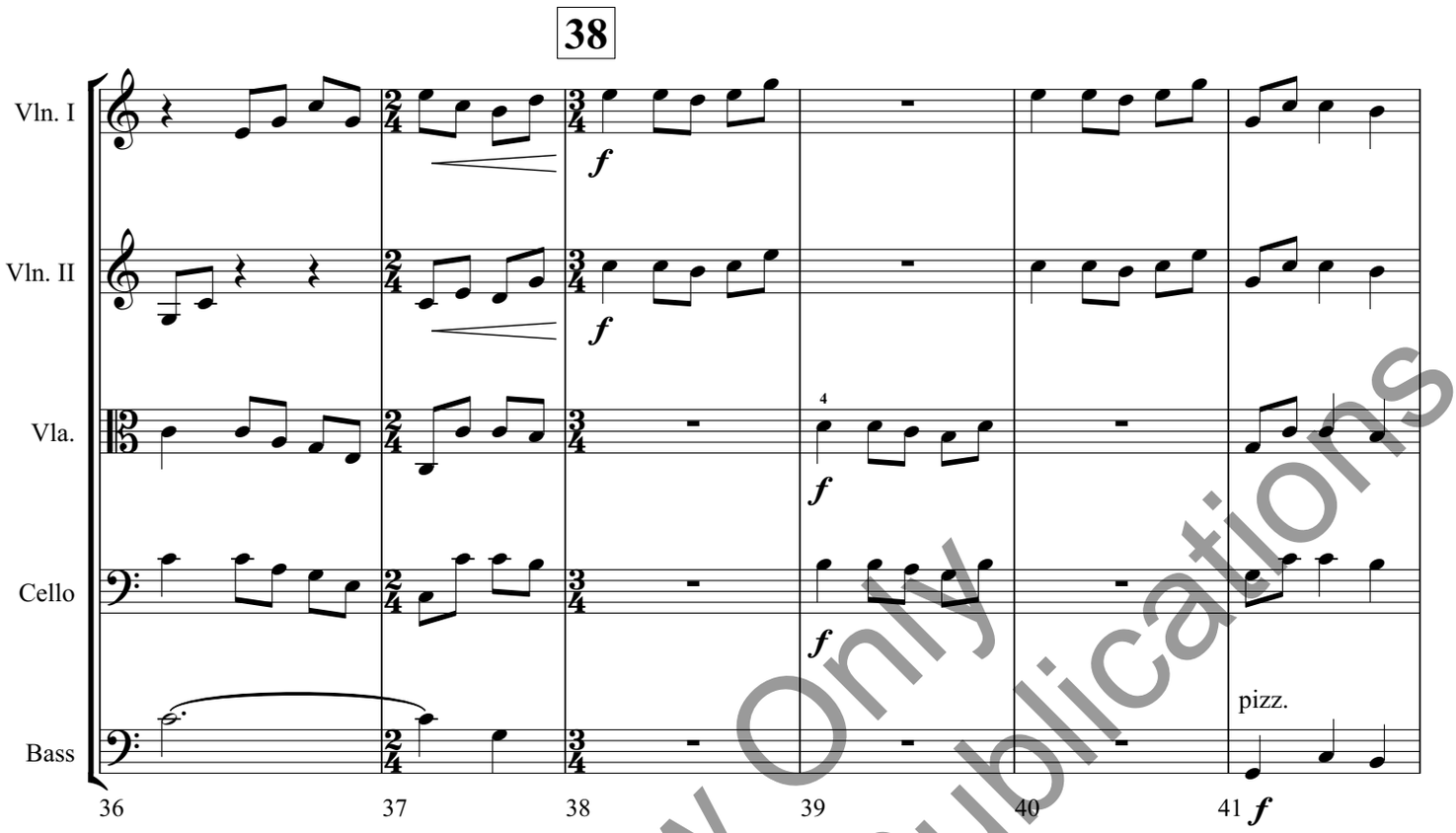

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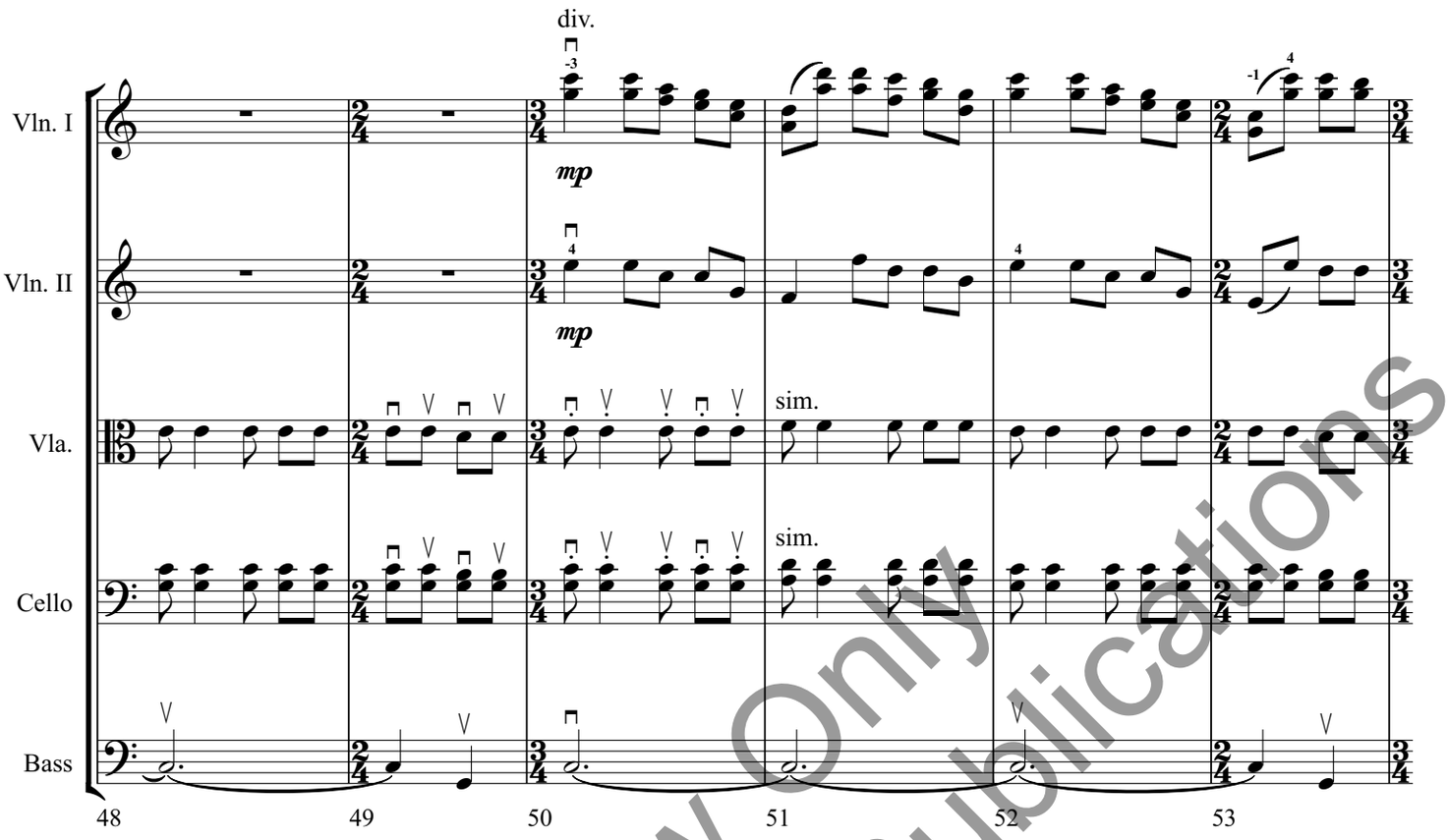

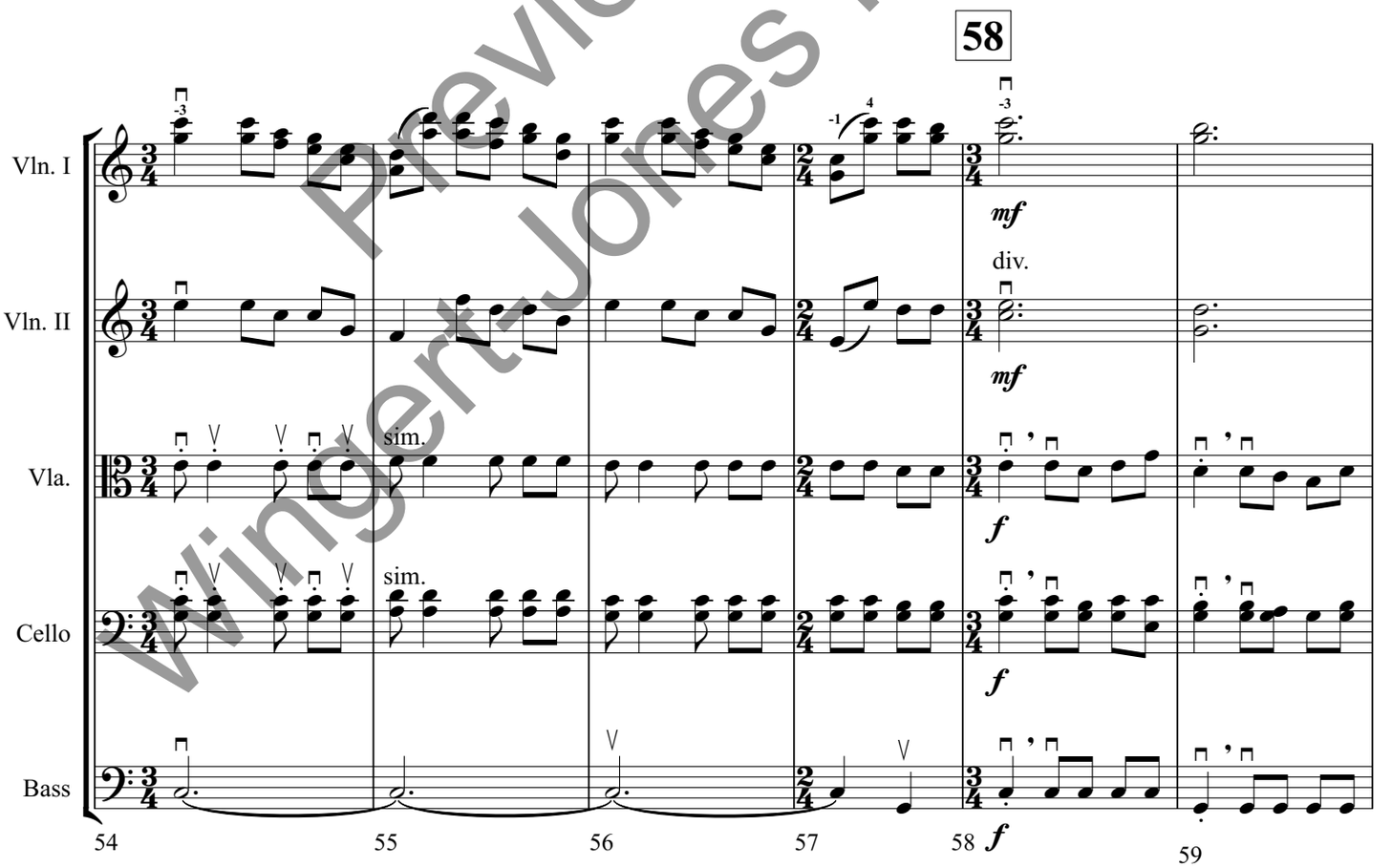

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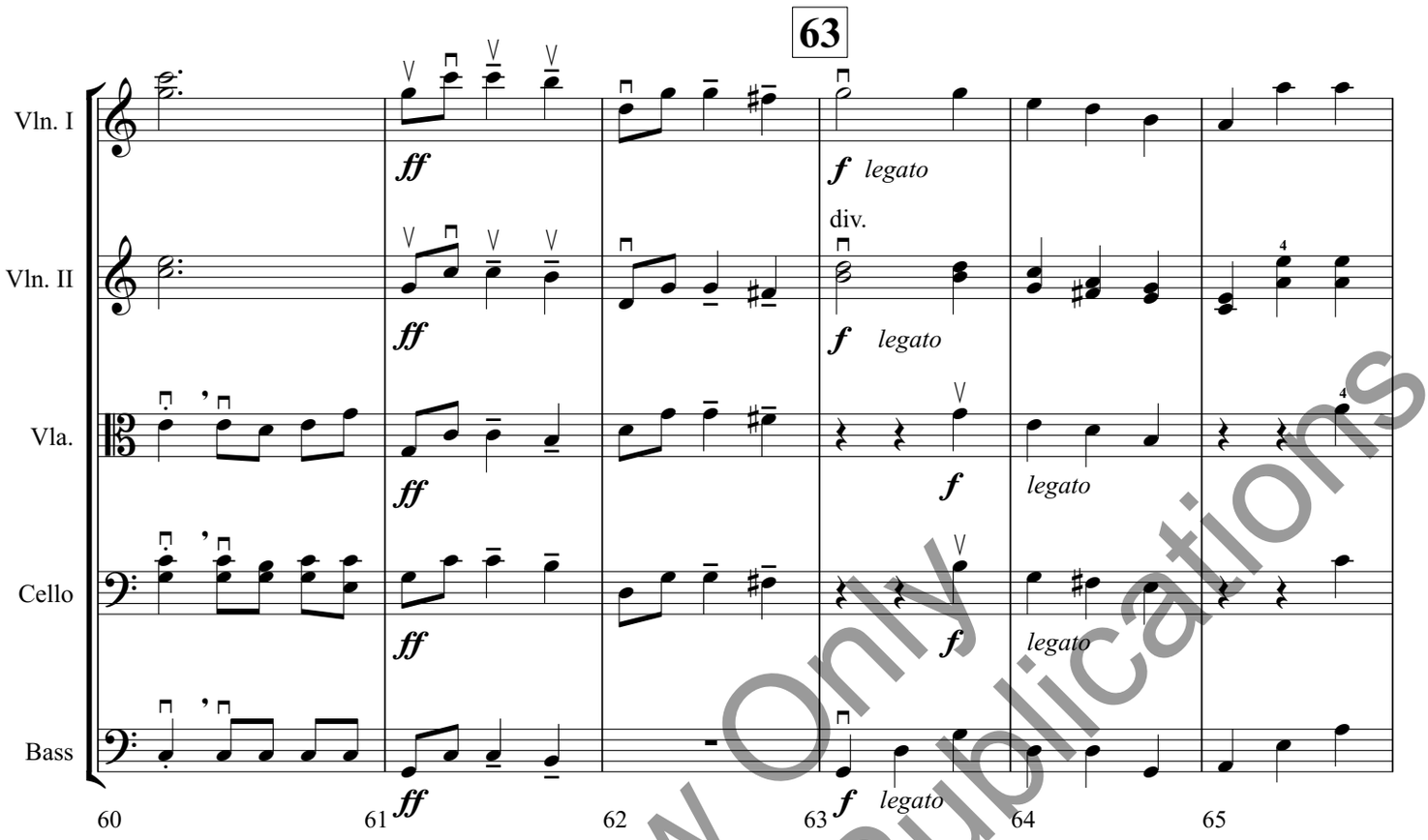

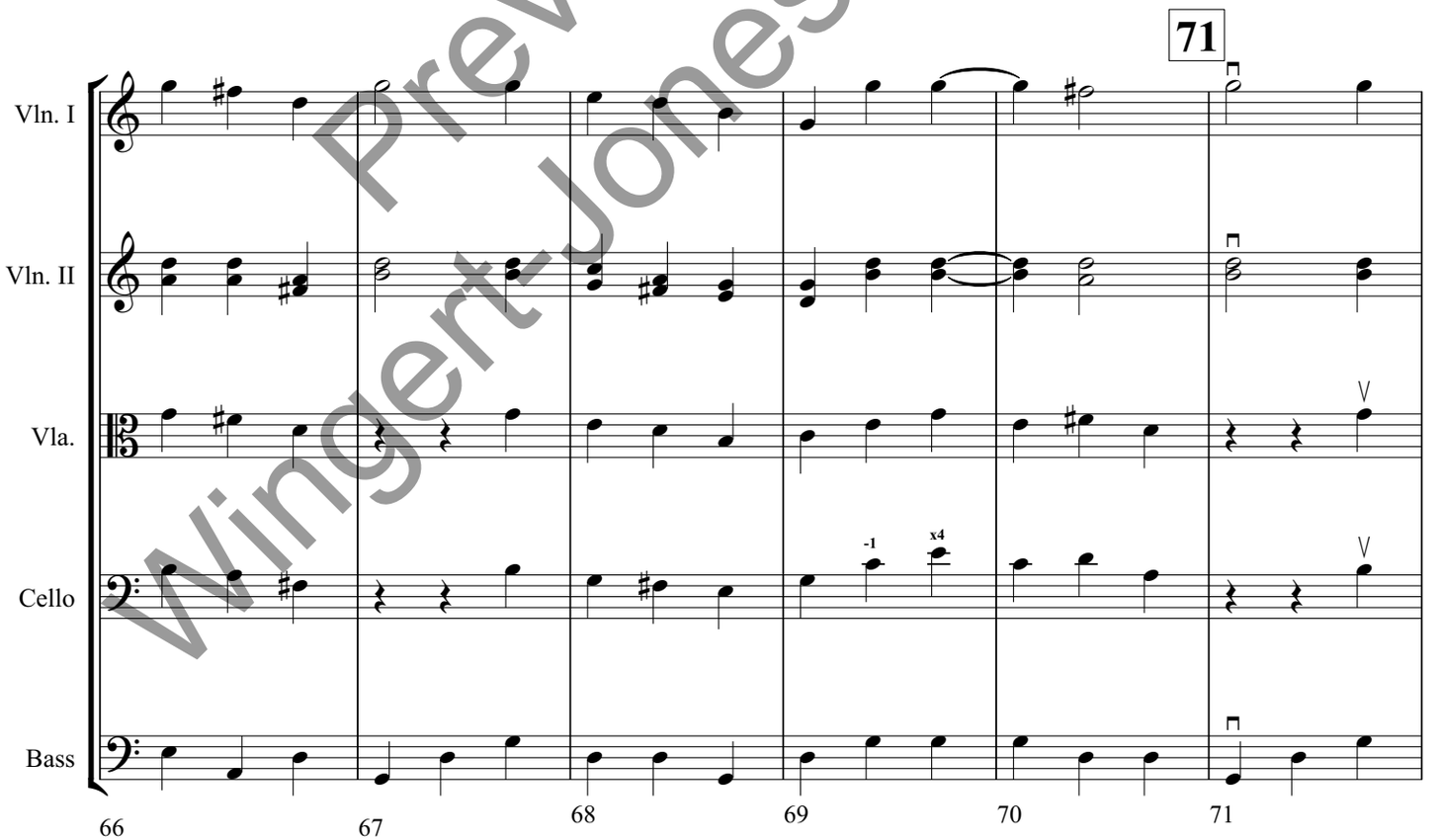

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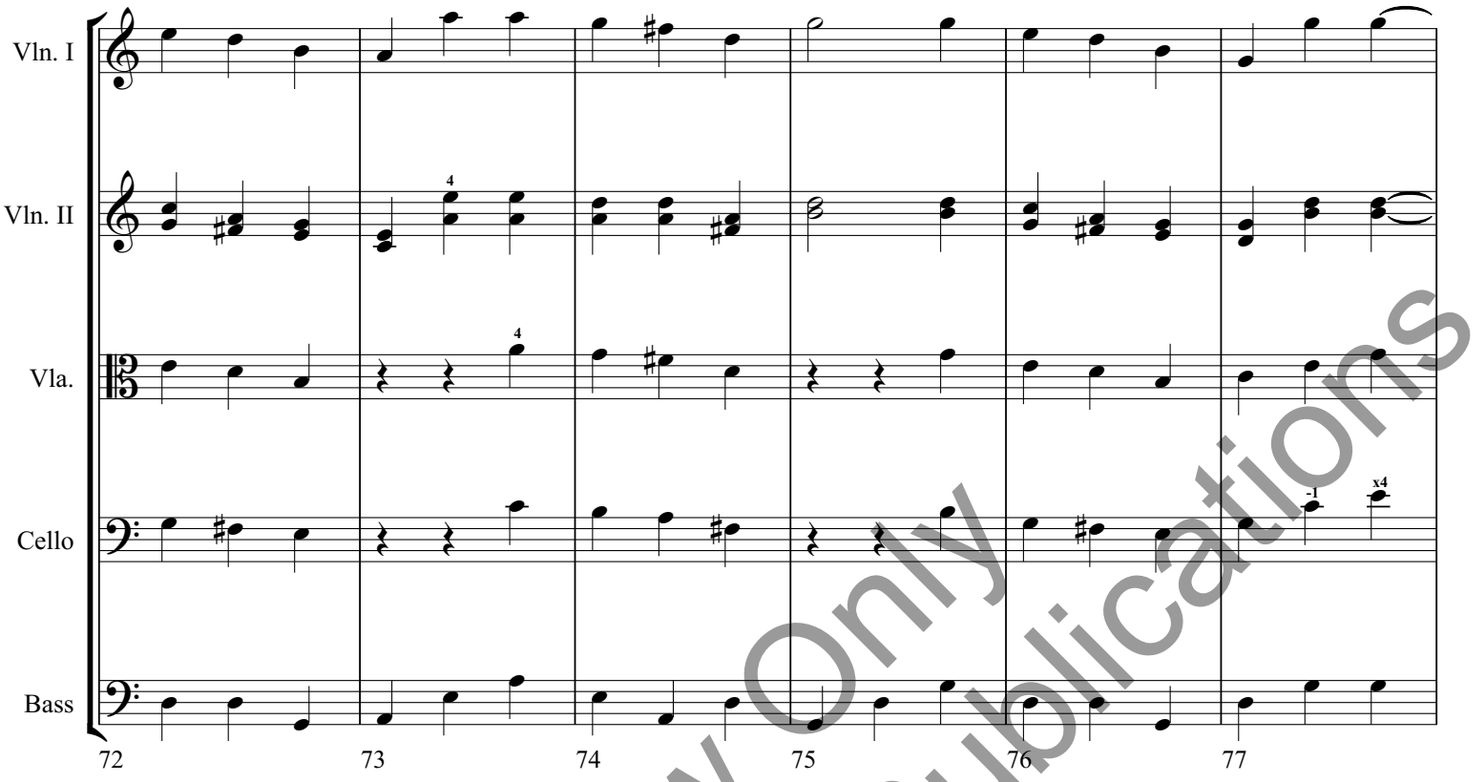

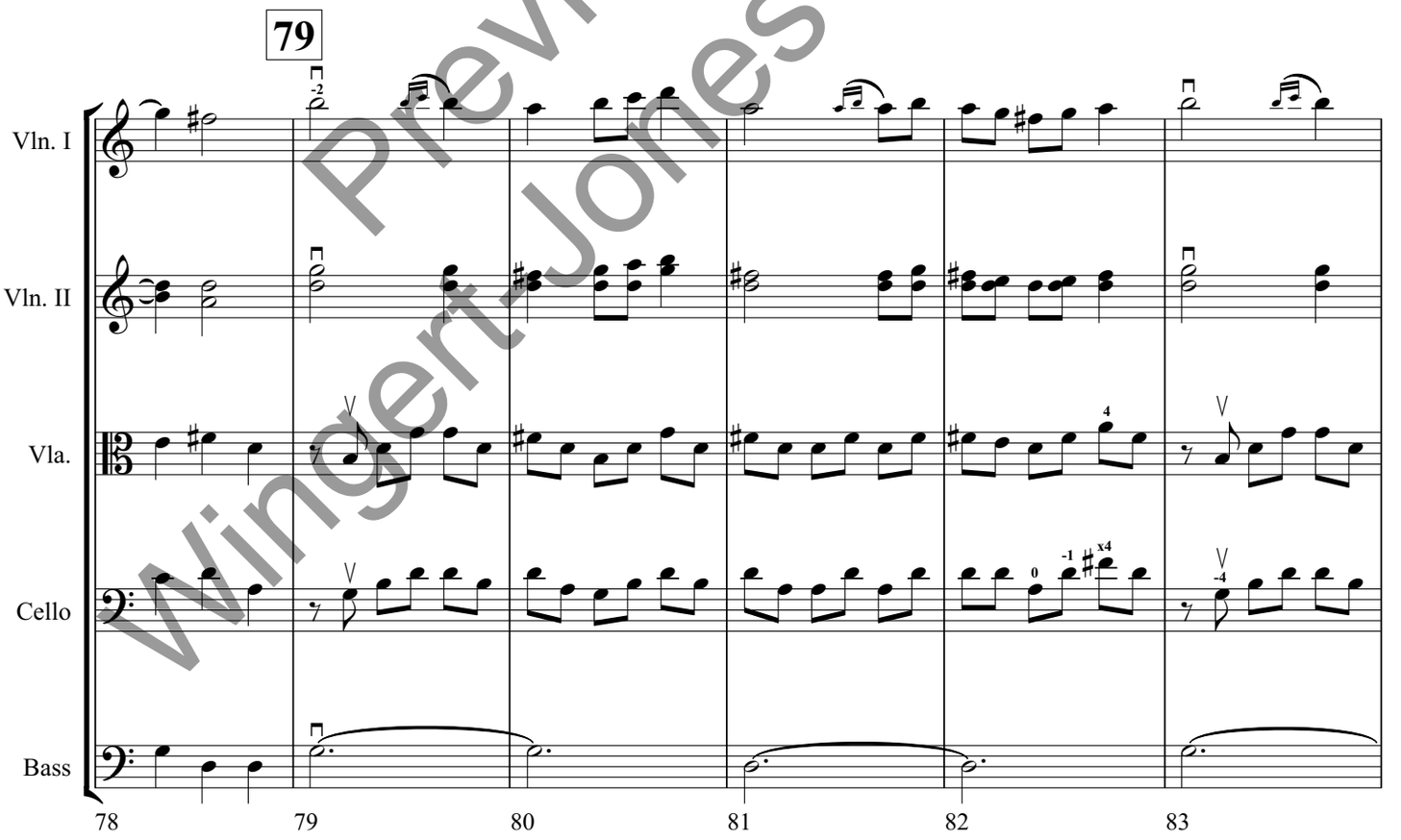

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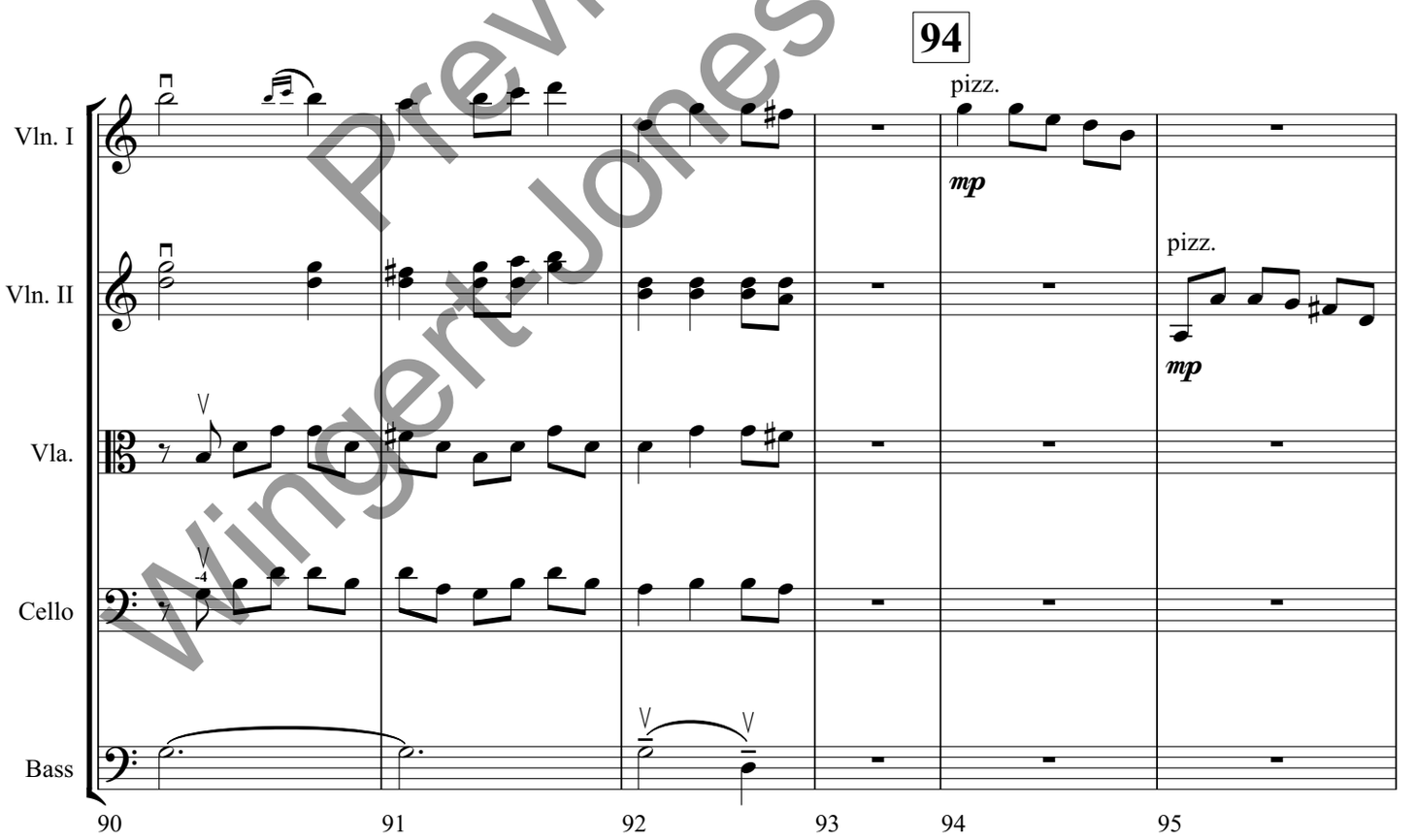

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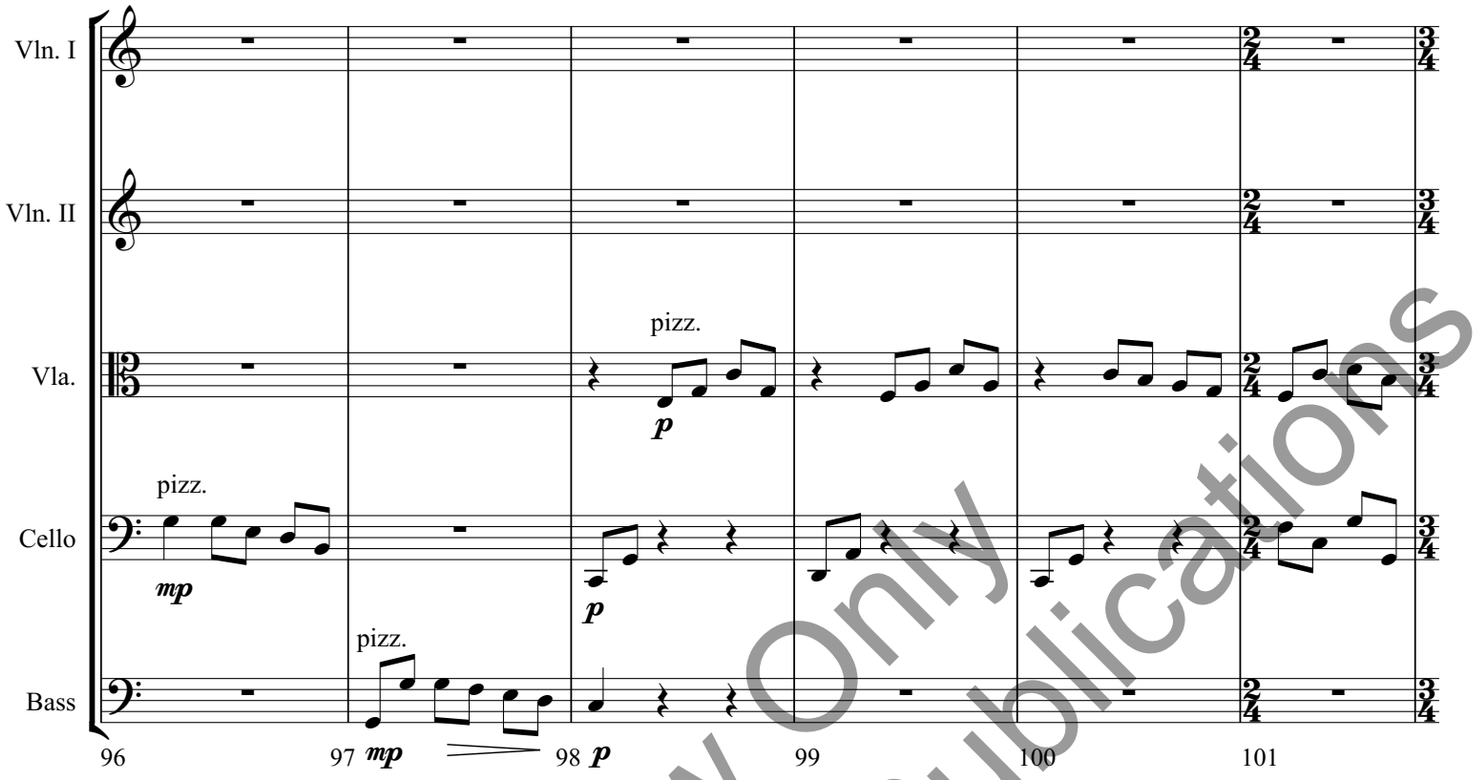

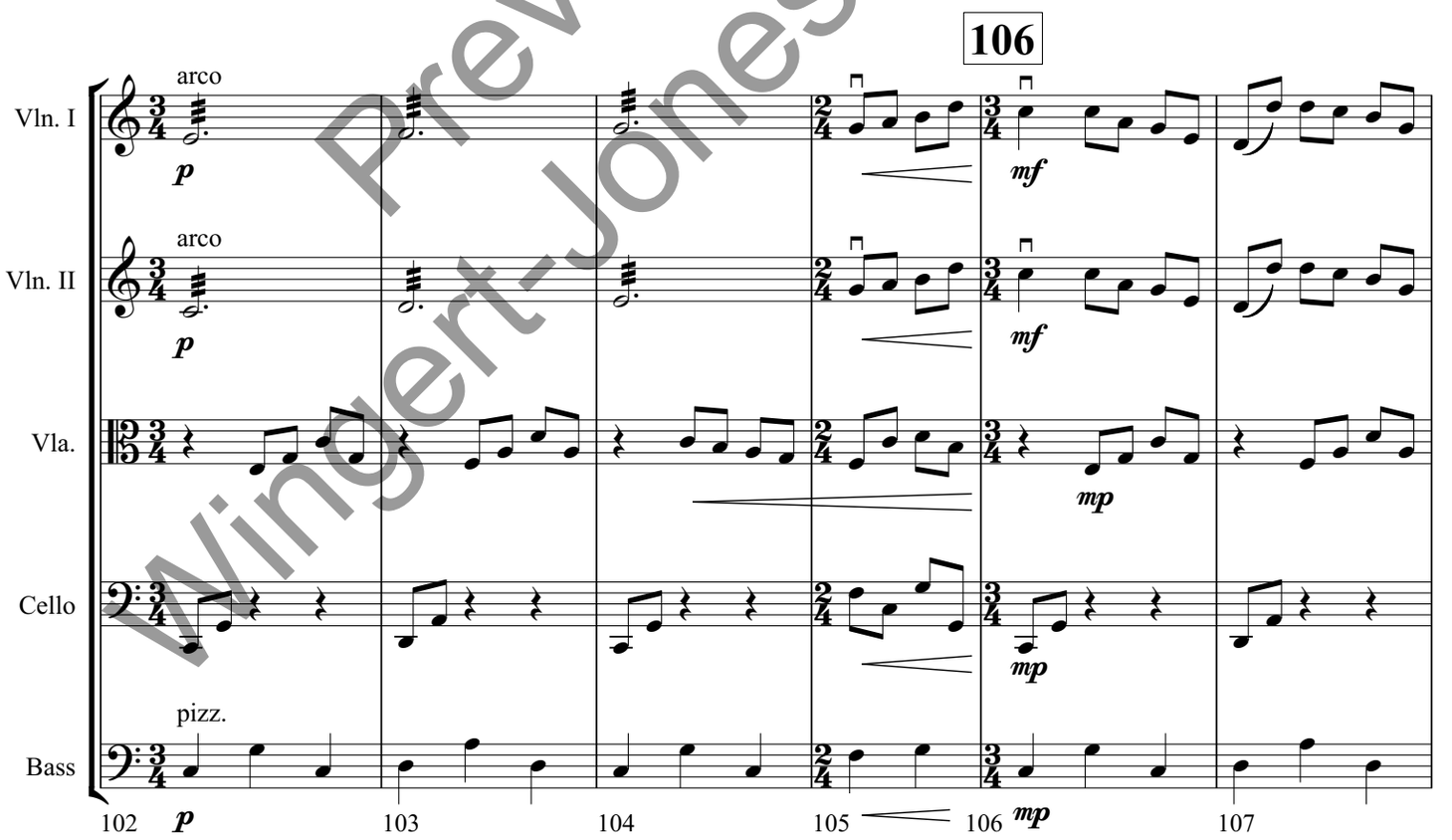

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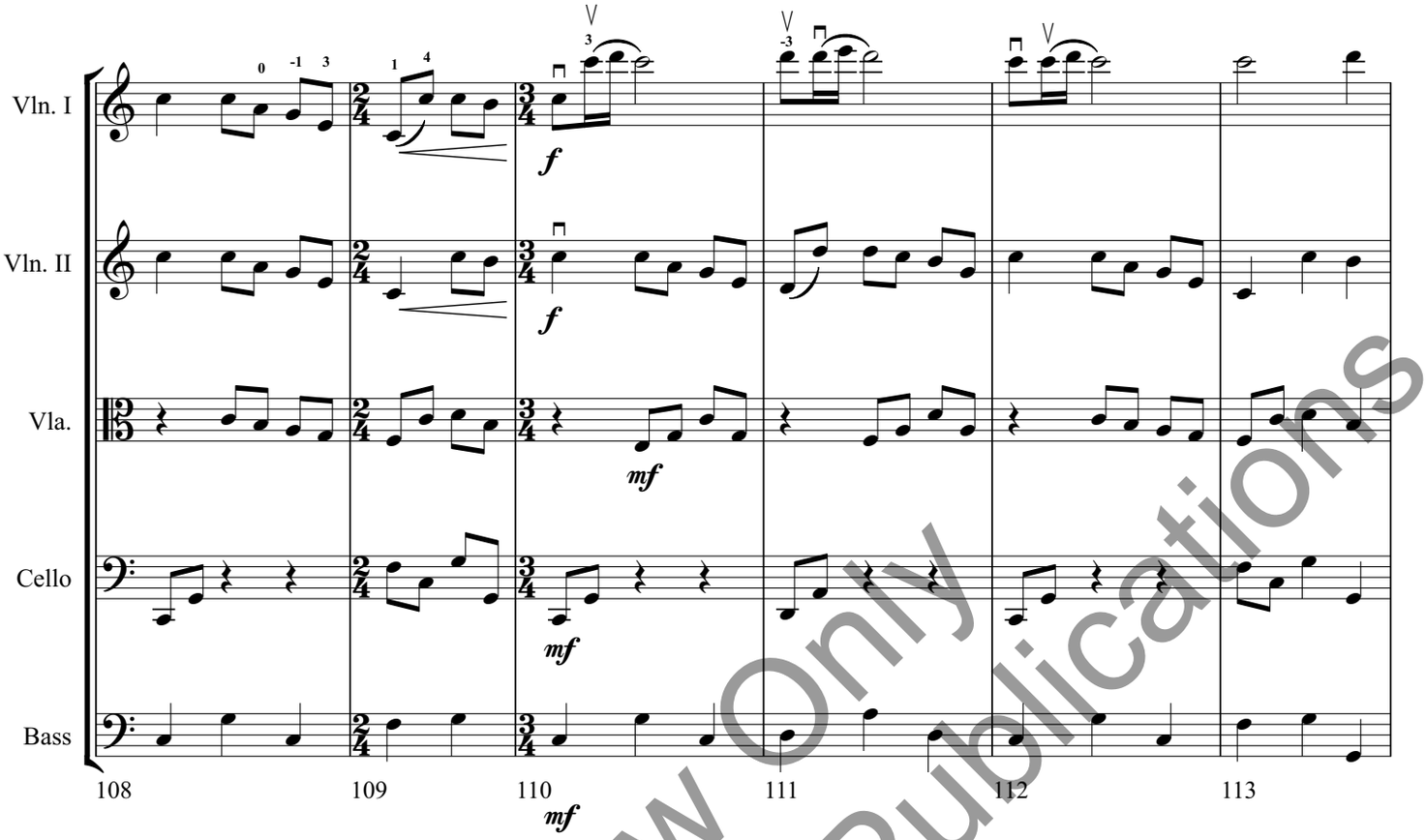

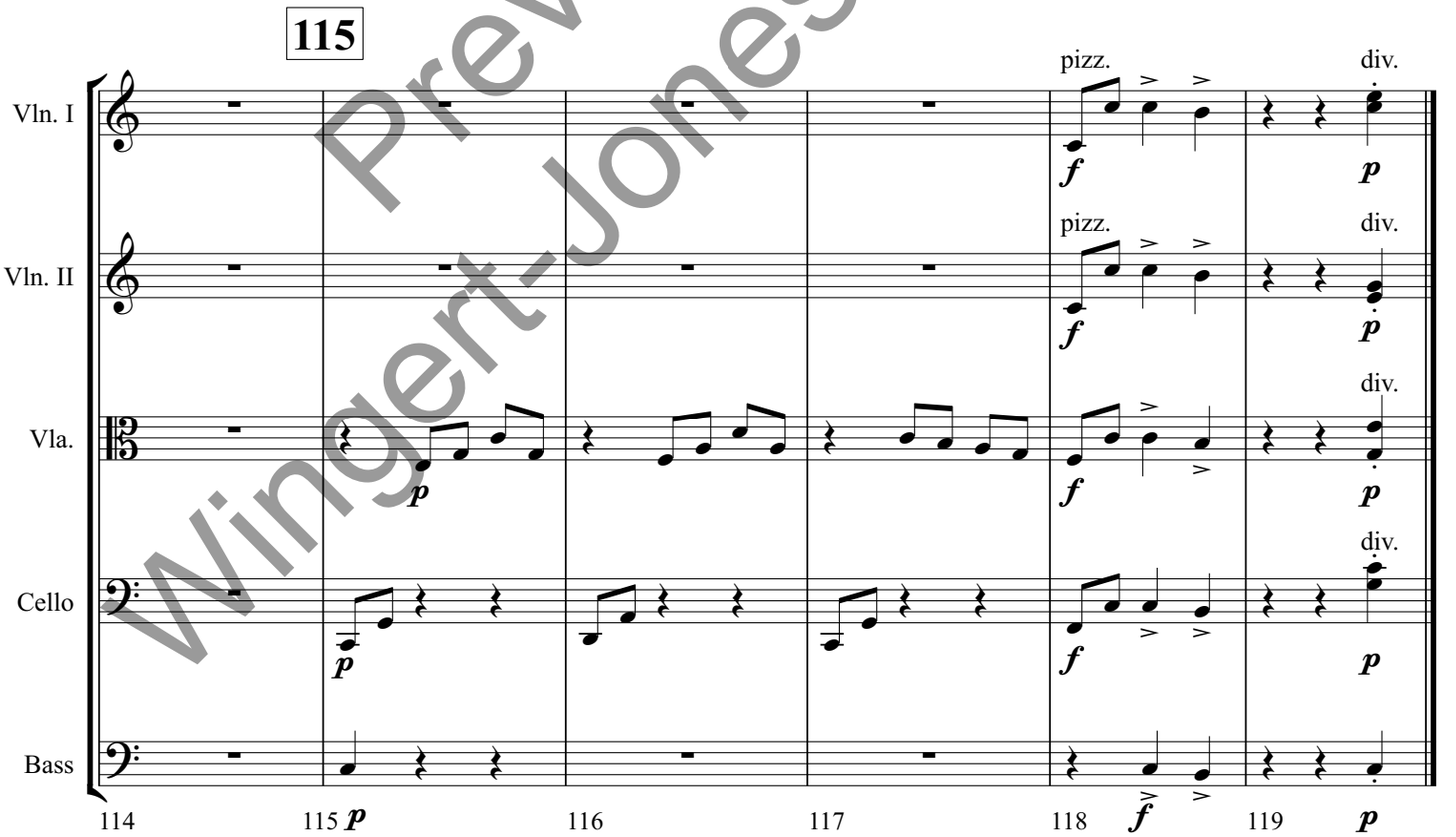

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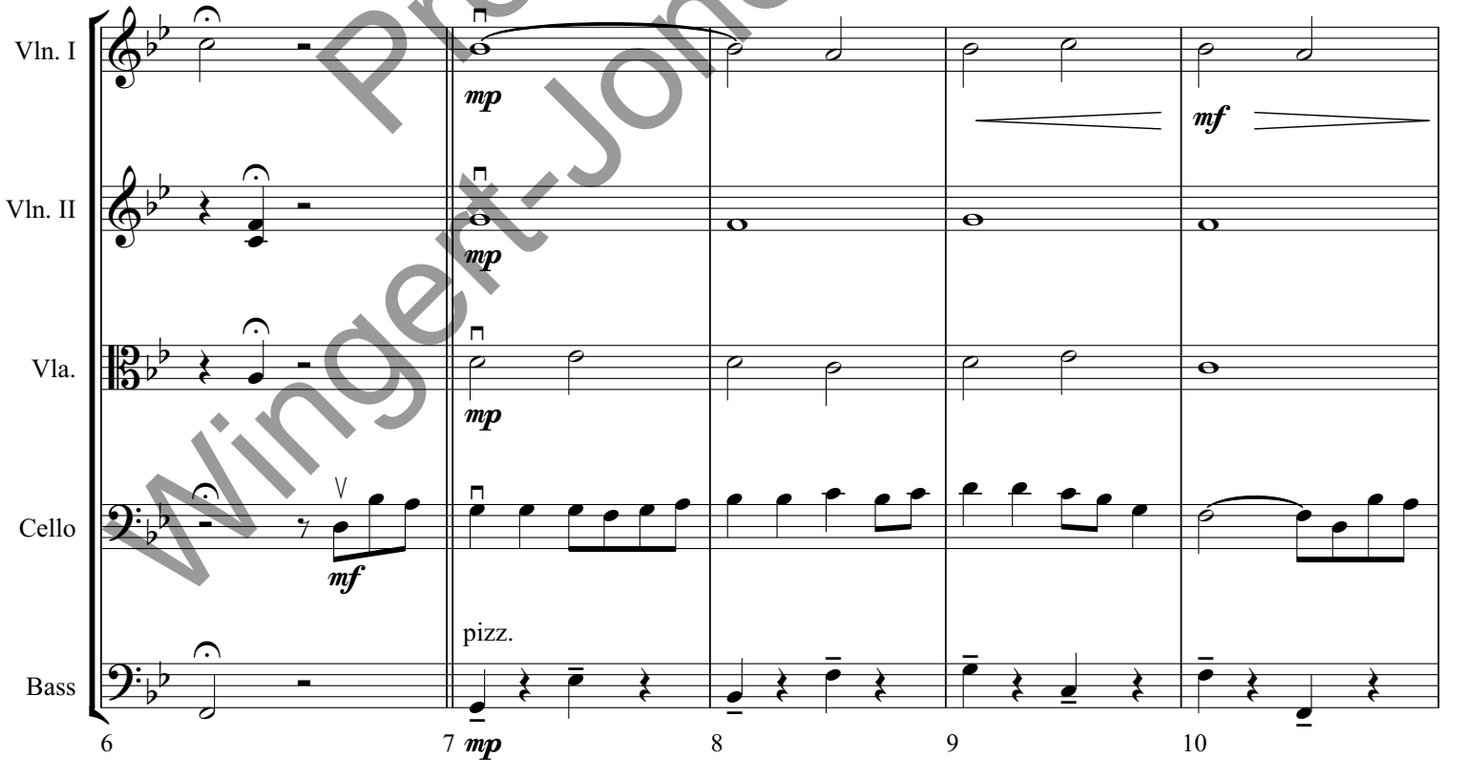
II. Dives and Lazarus

(with a hint of 'My Bonny Boy')

With anticipation ♩ = 60

7 Quicker, but with much expression ♩ = 72



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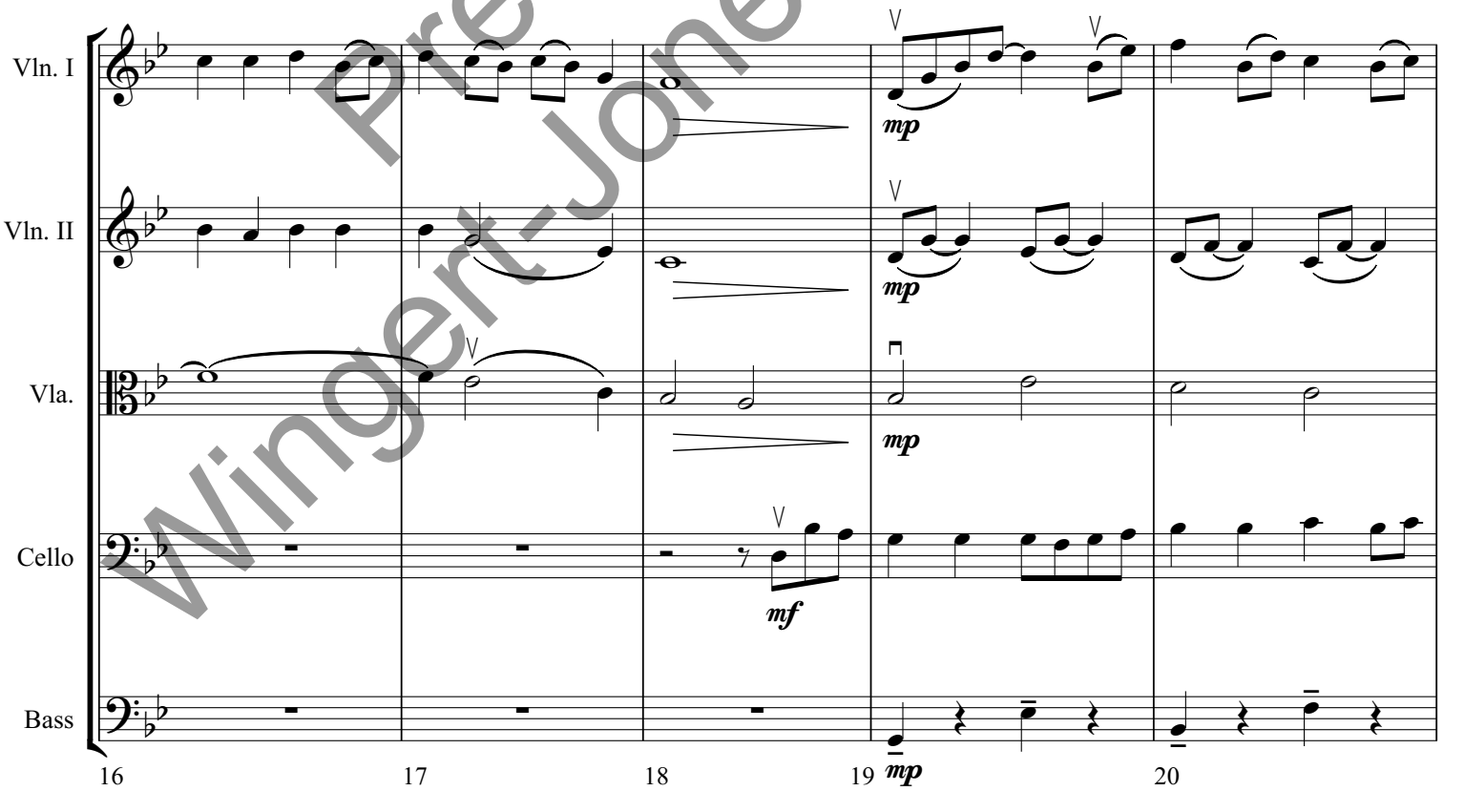

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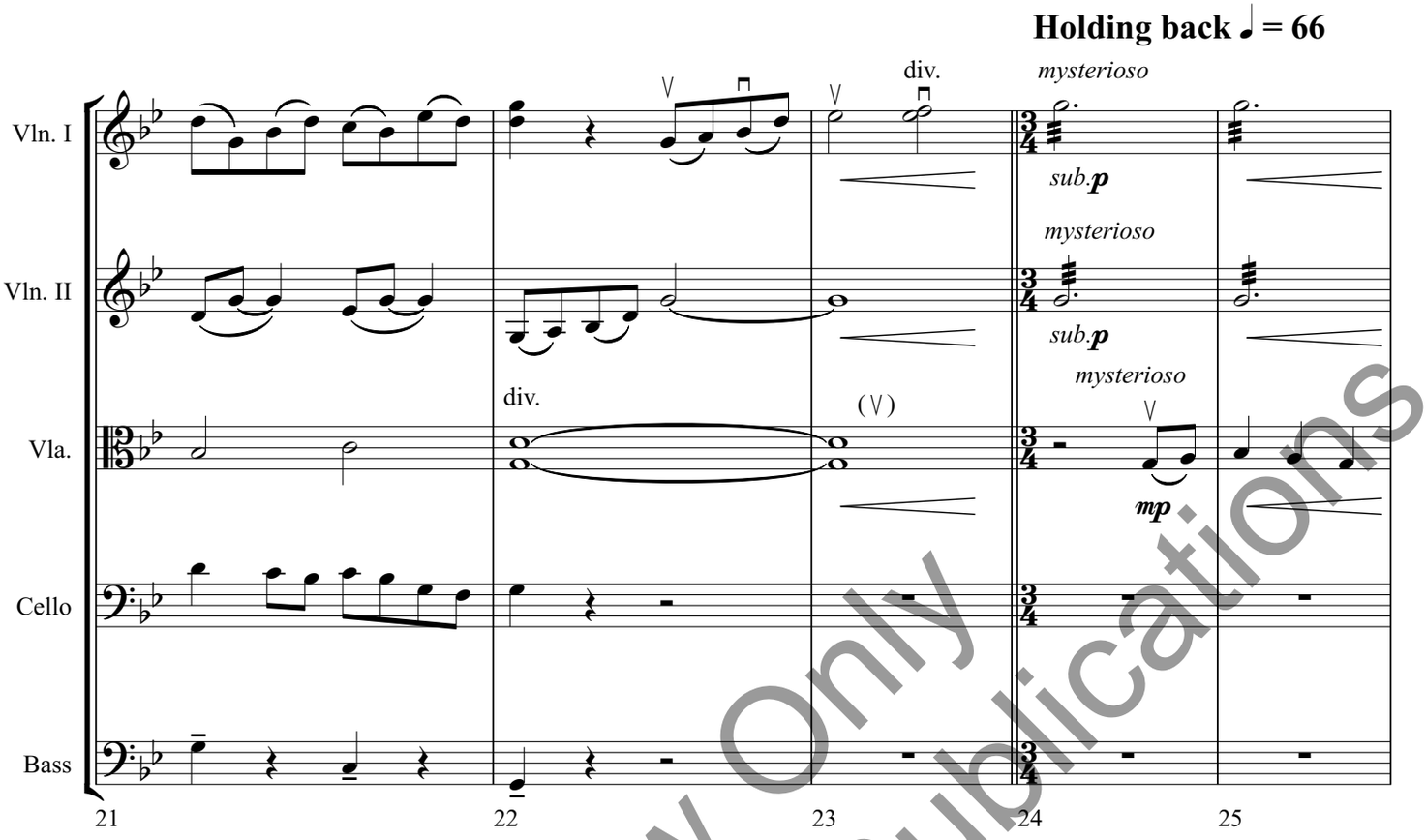

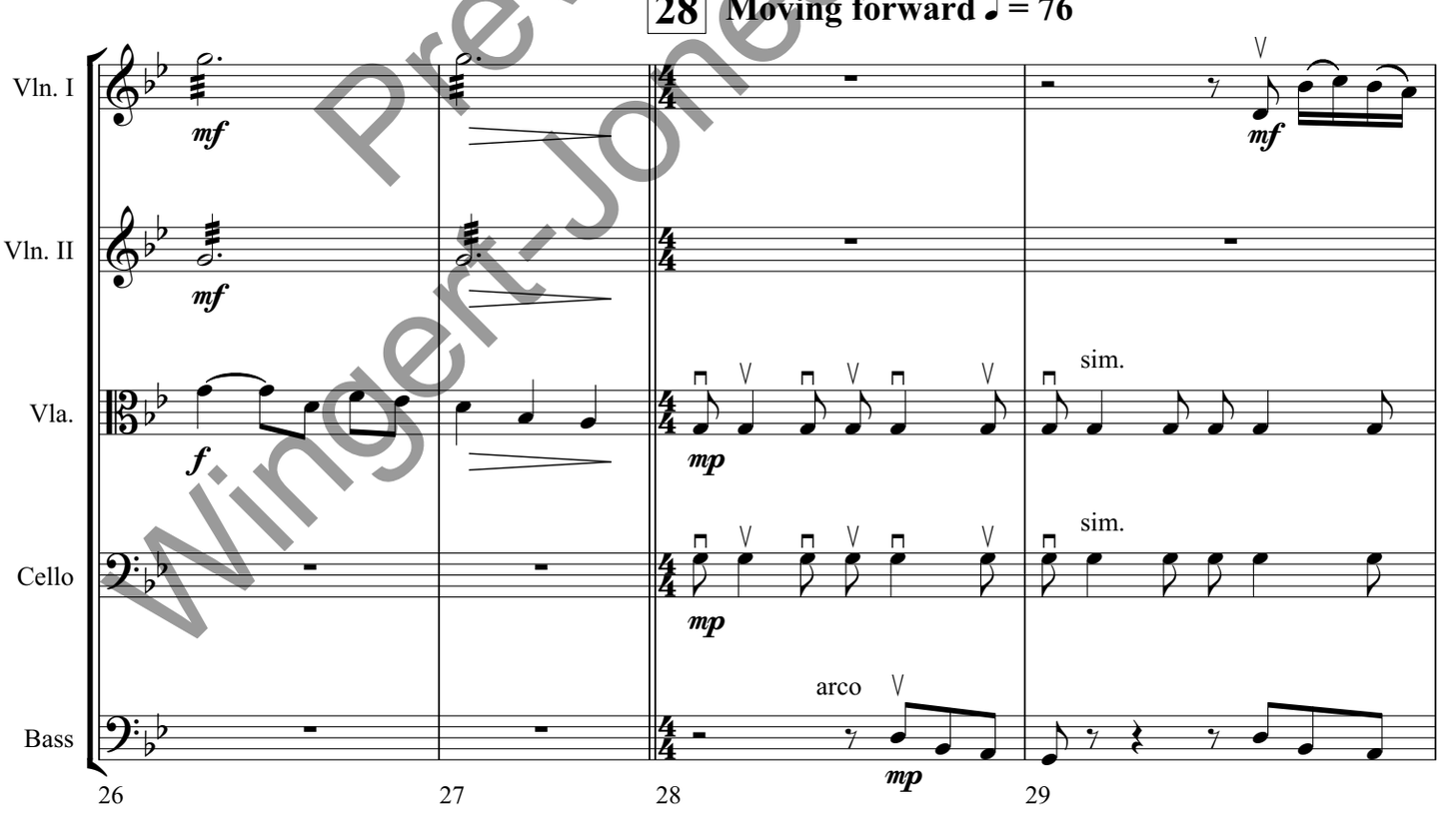

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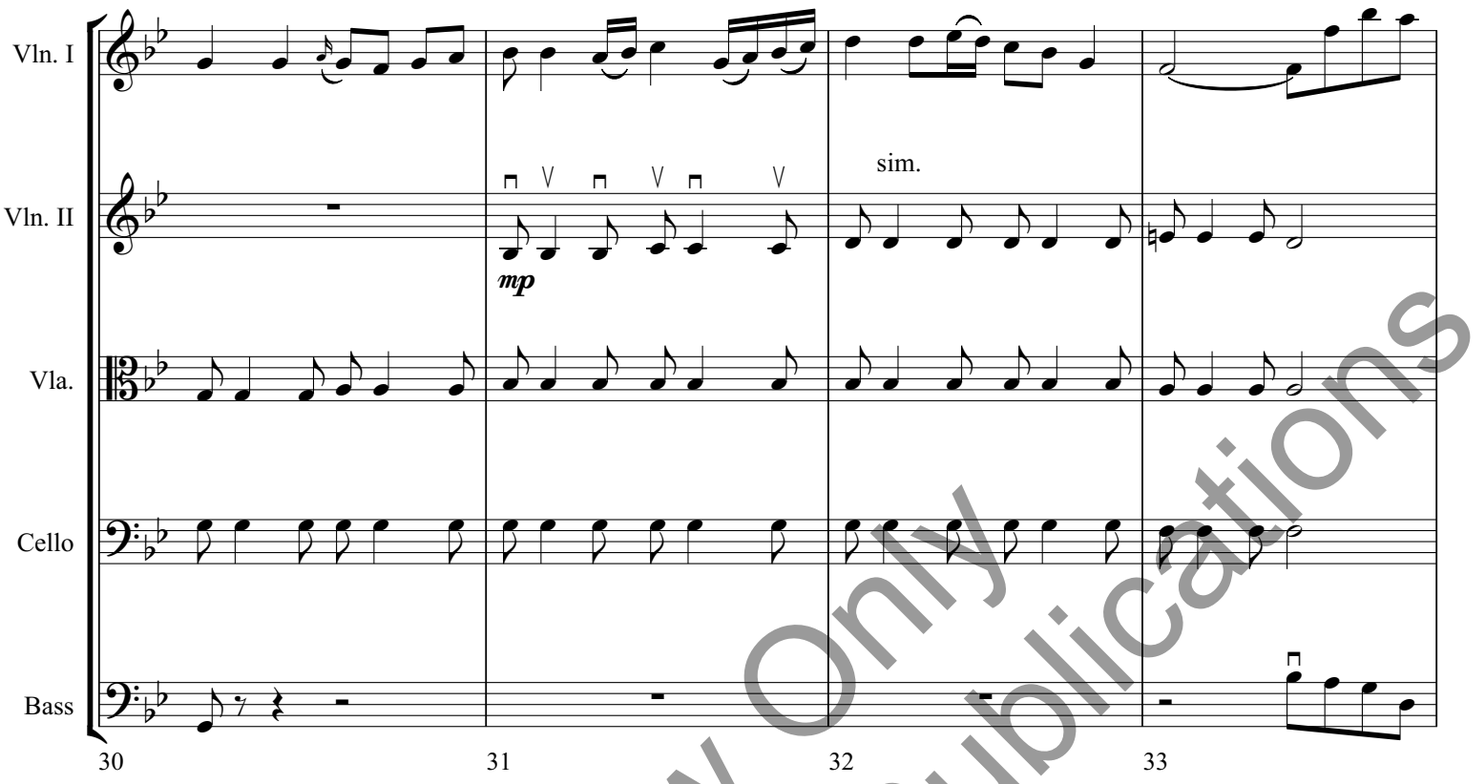

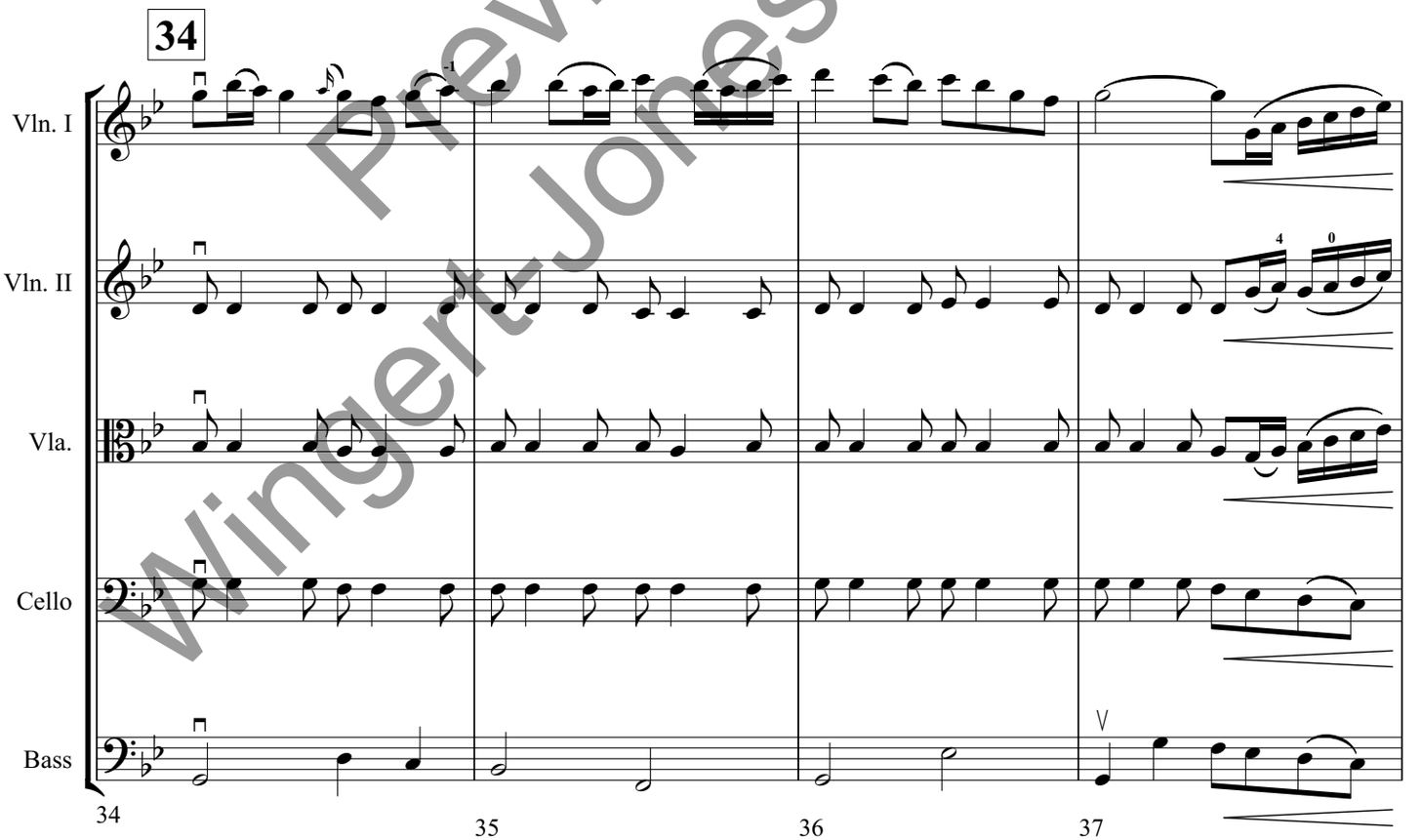

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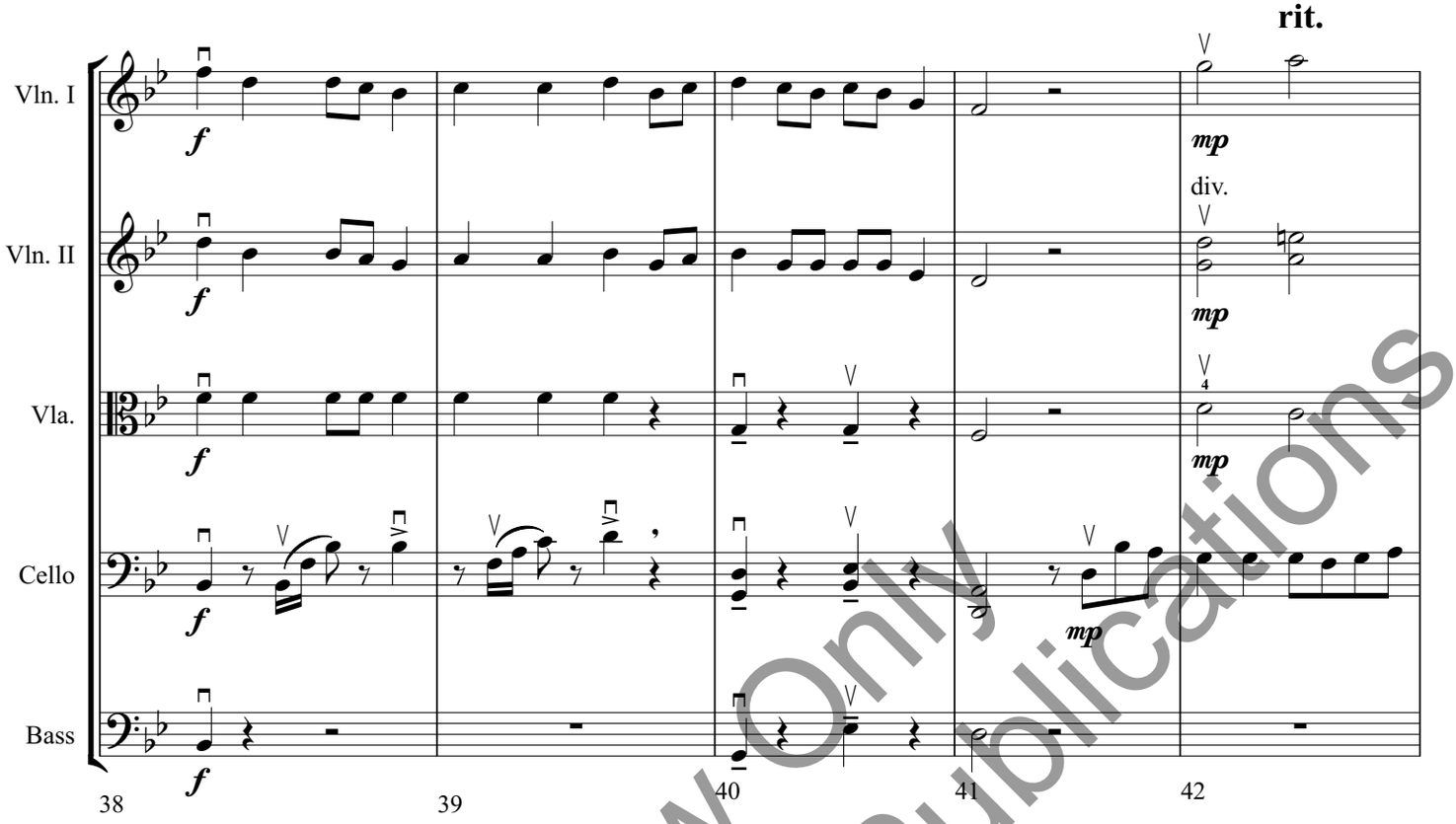

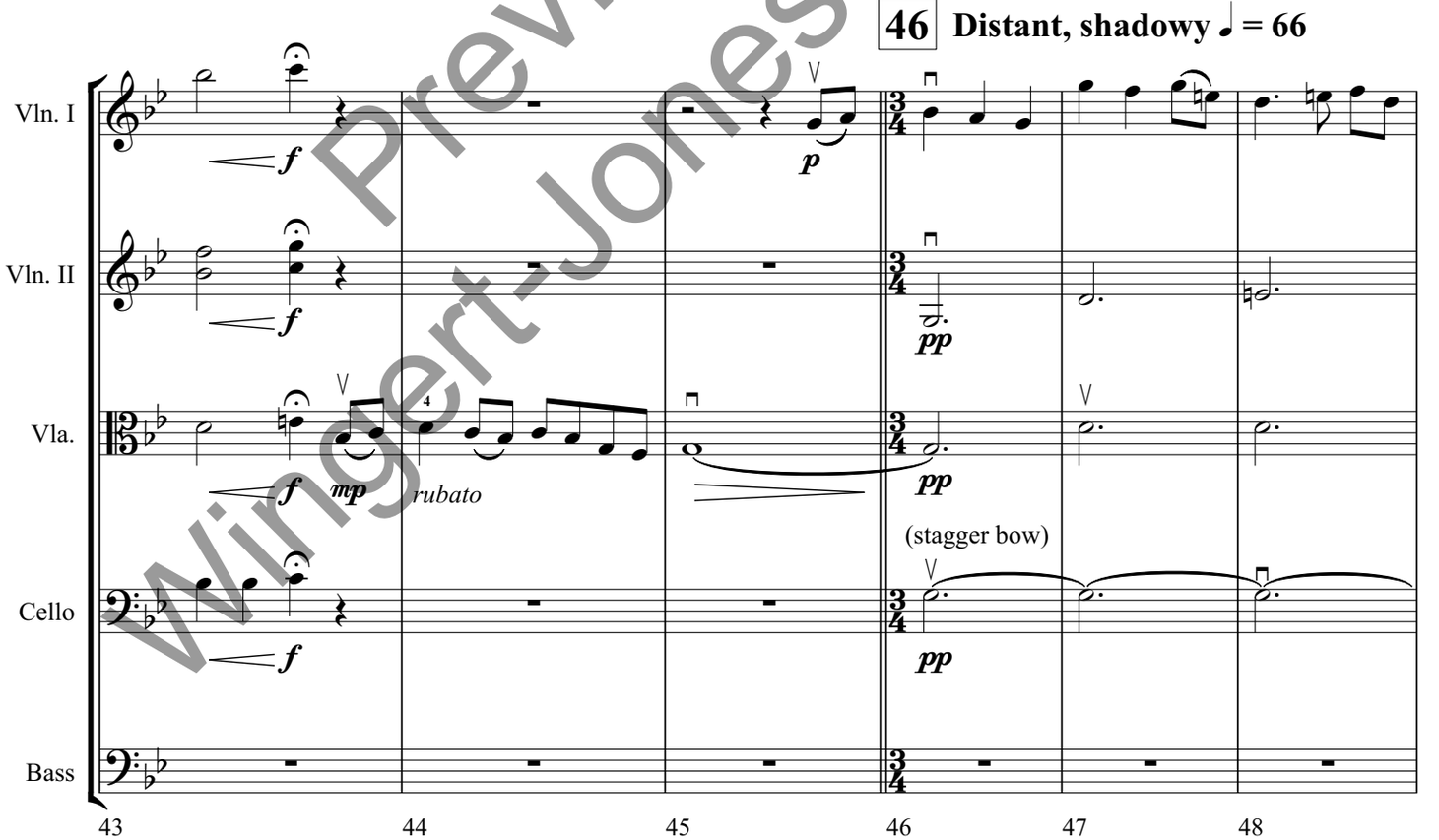

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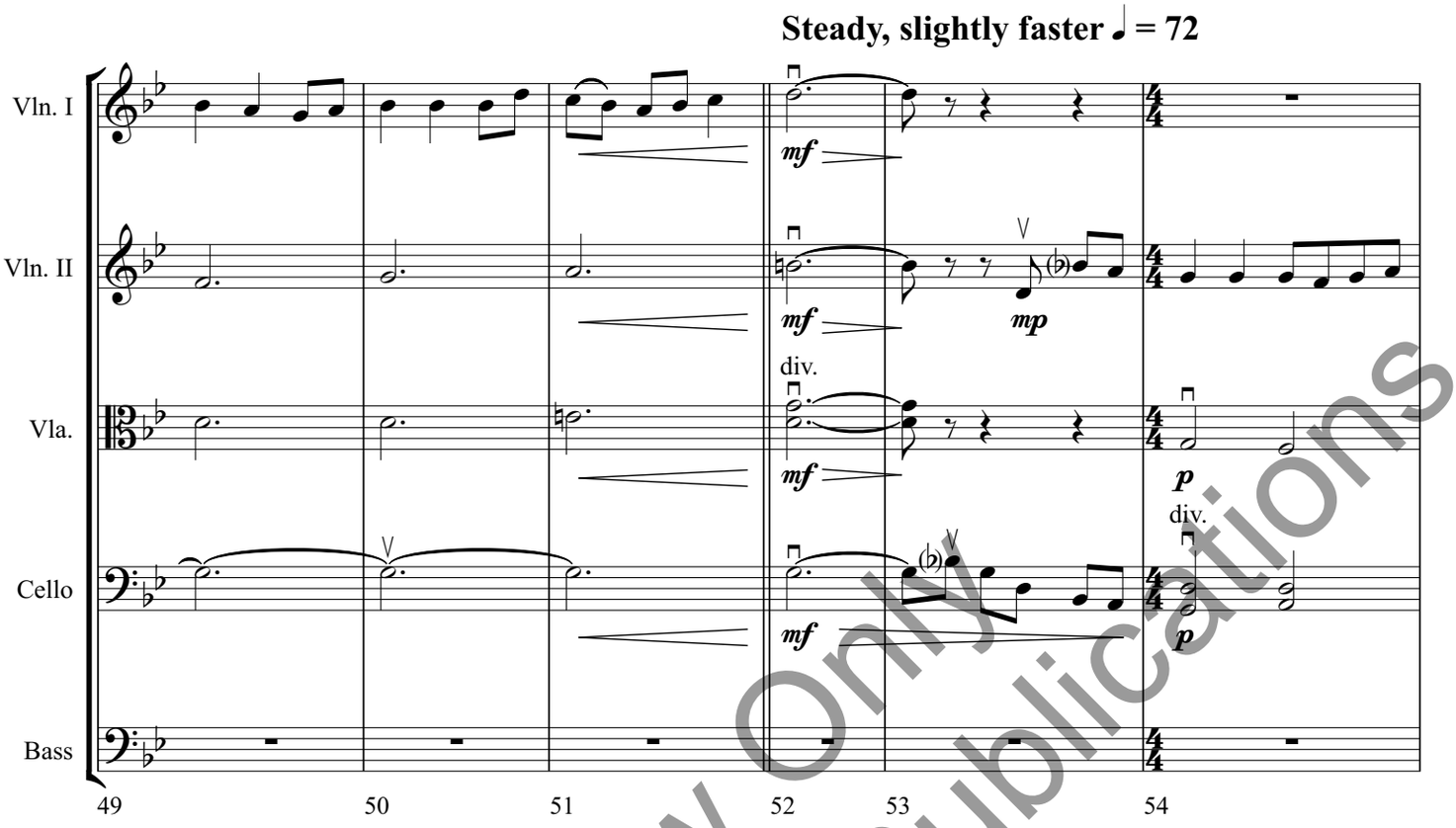

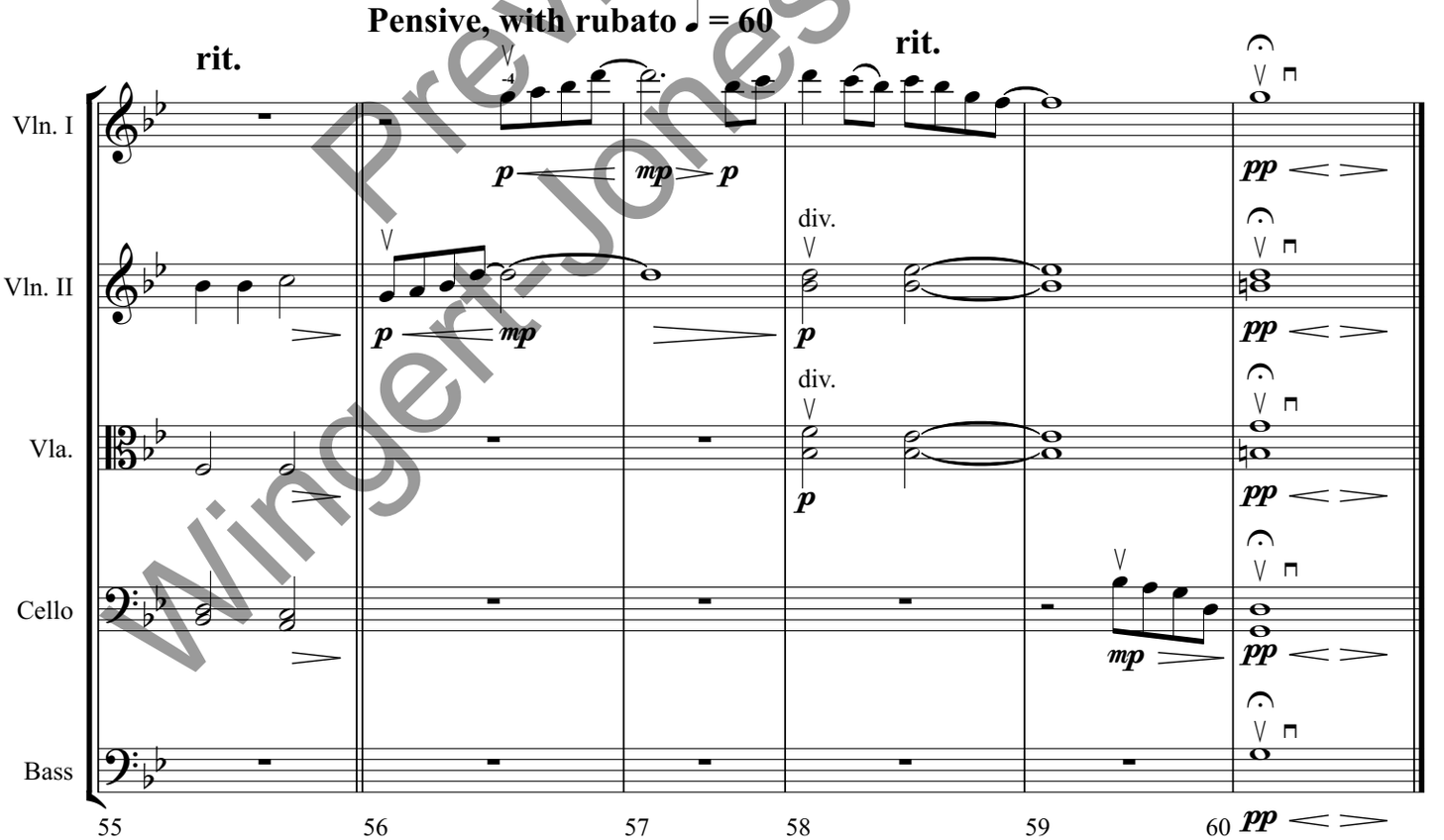

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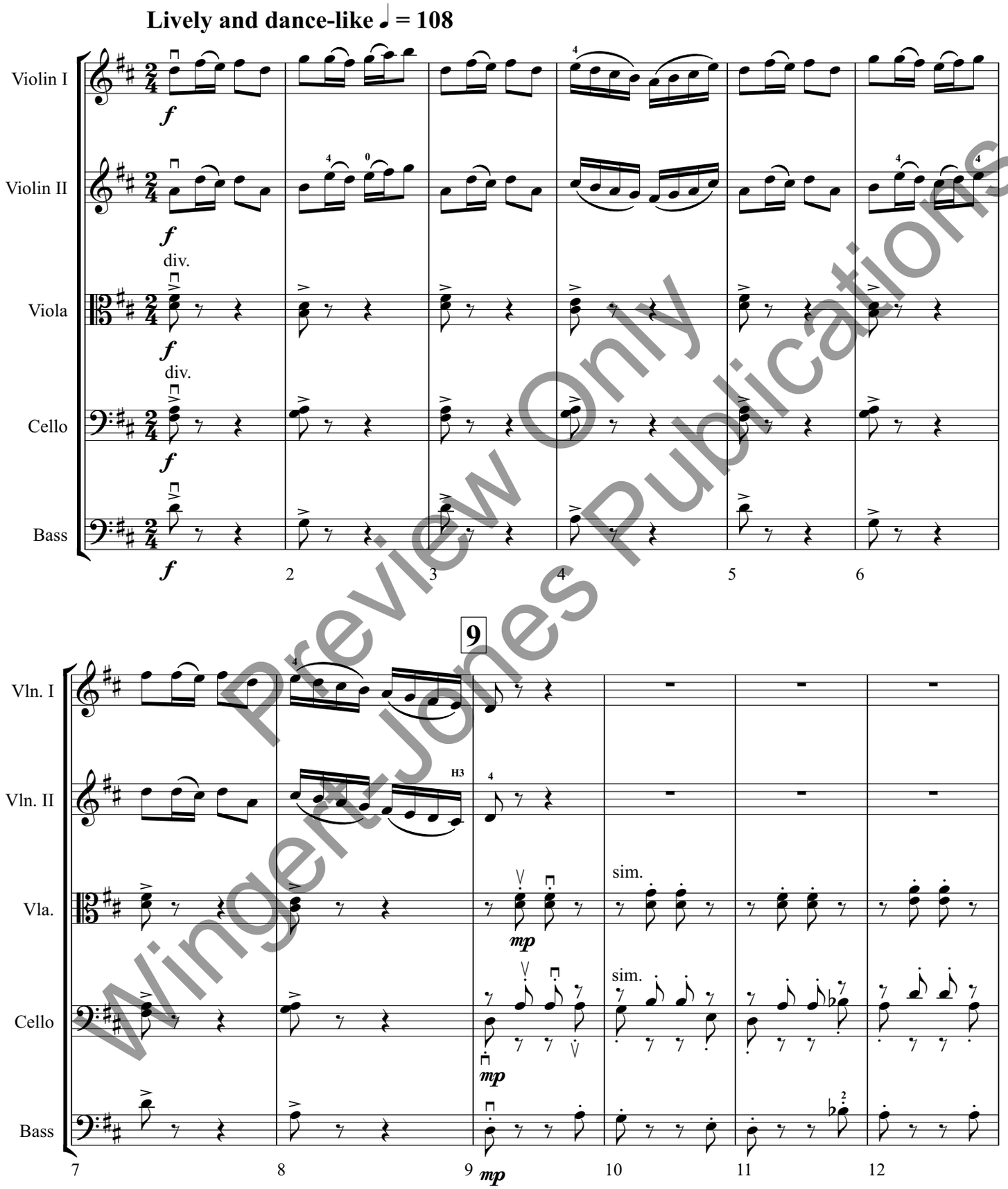
III.
The Keel Row



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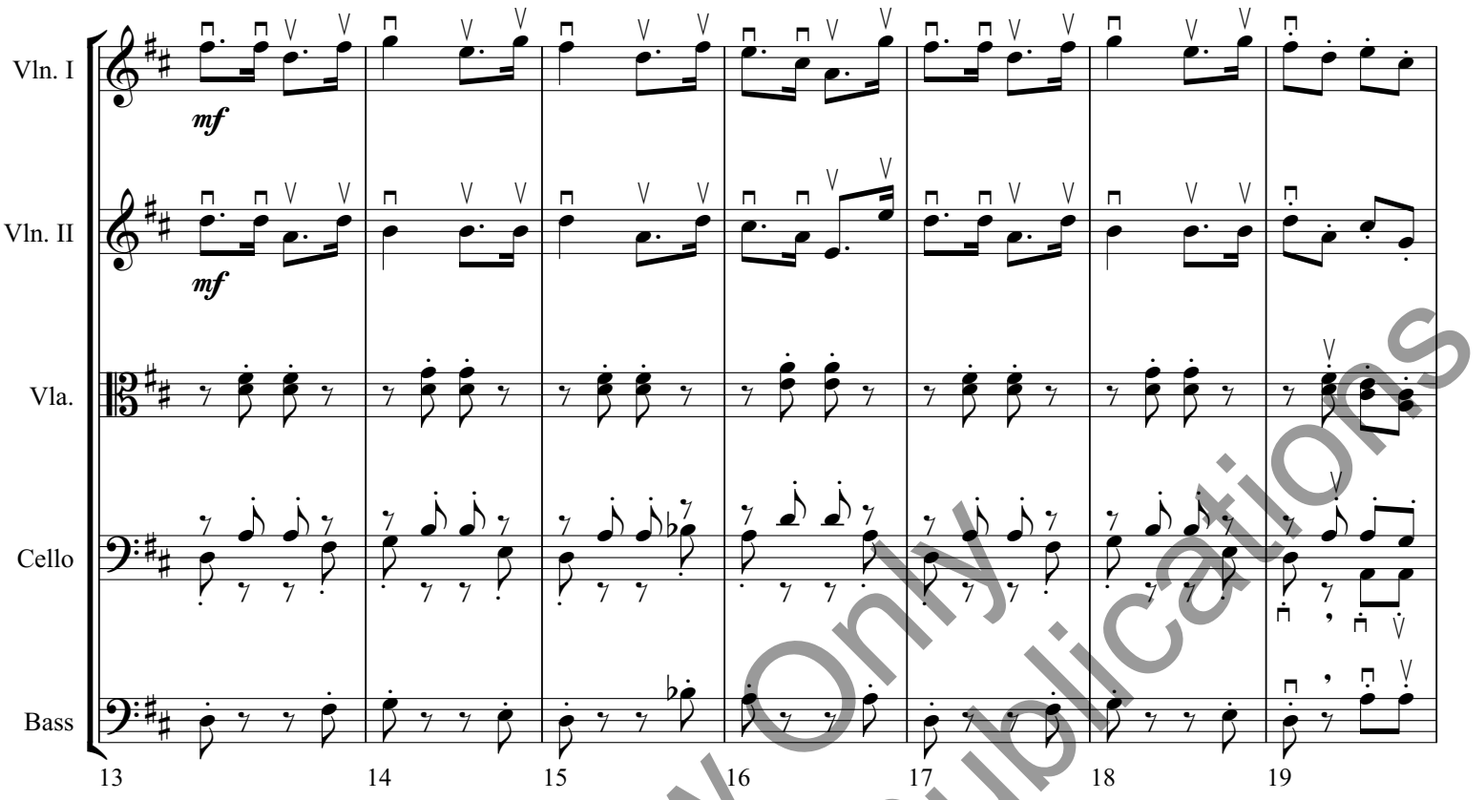

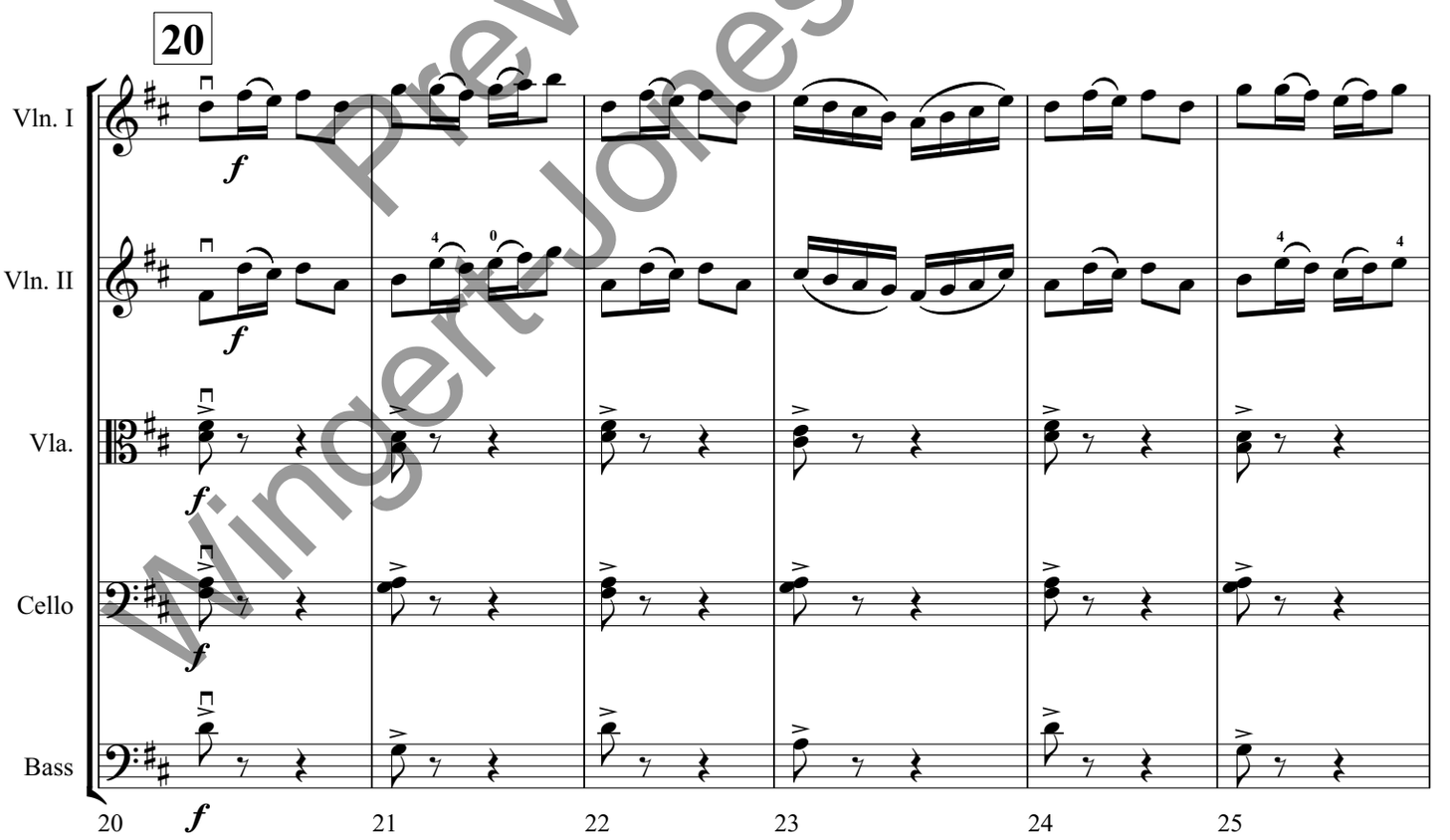

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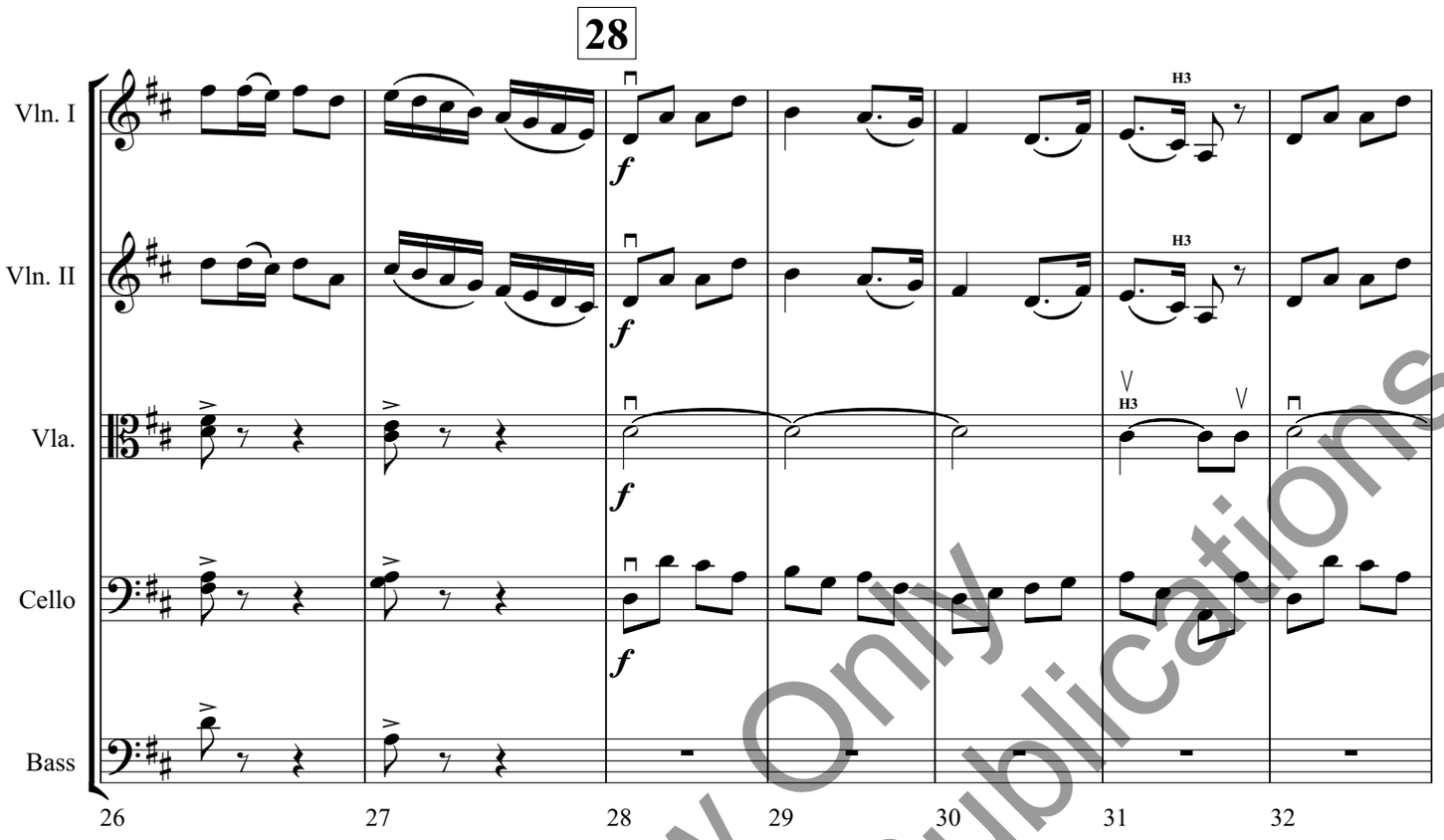

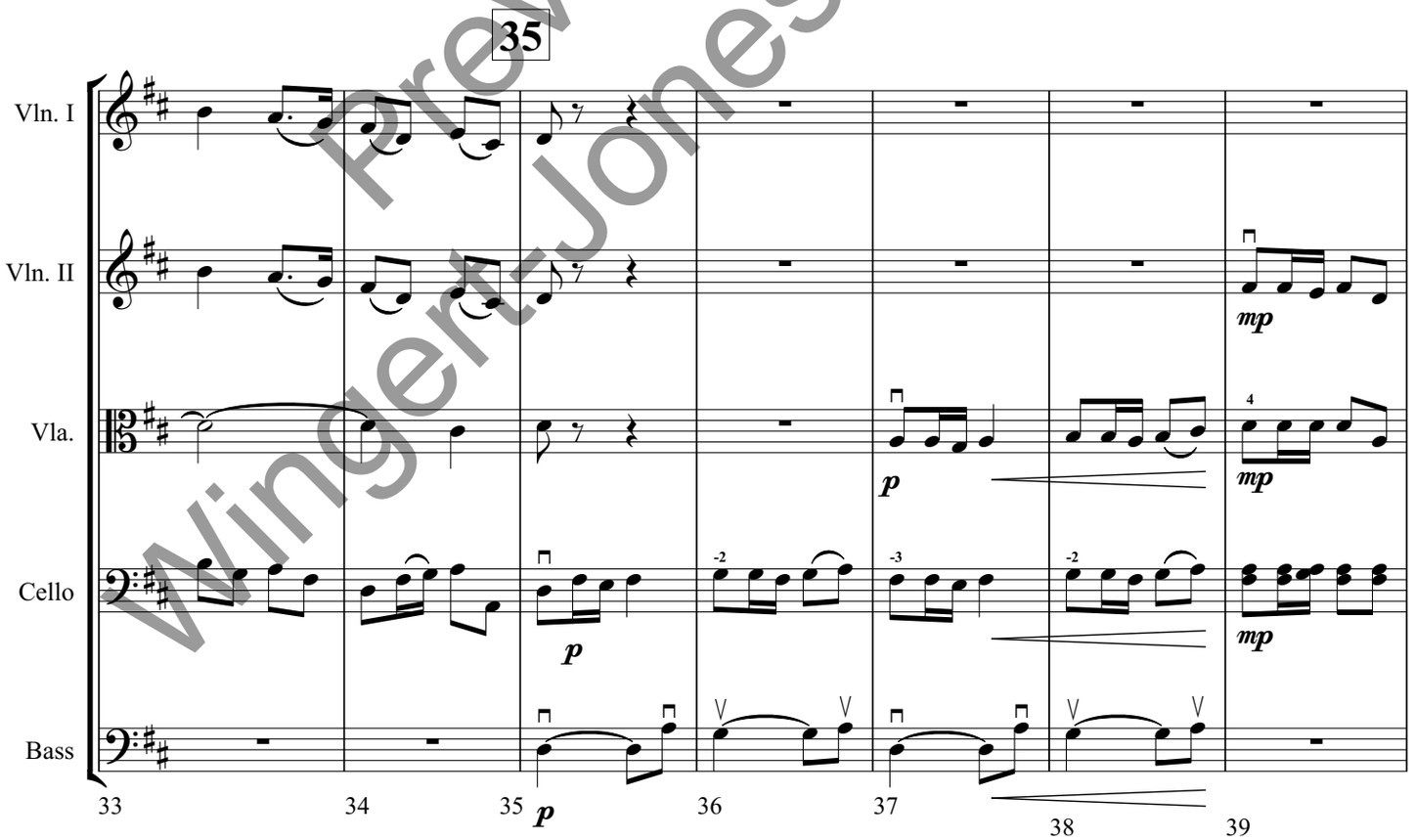

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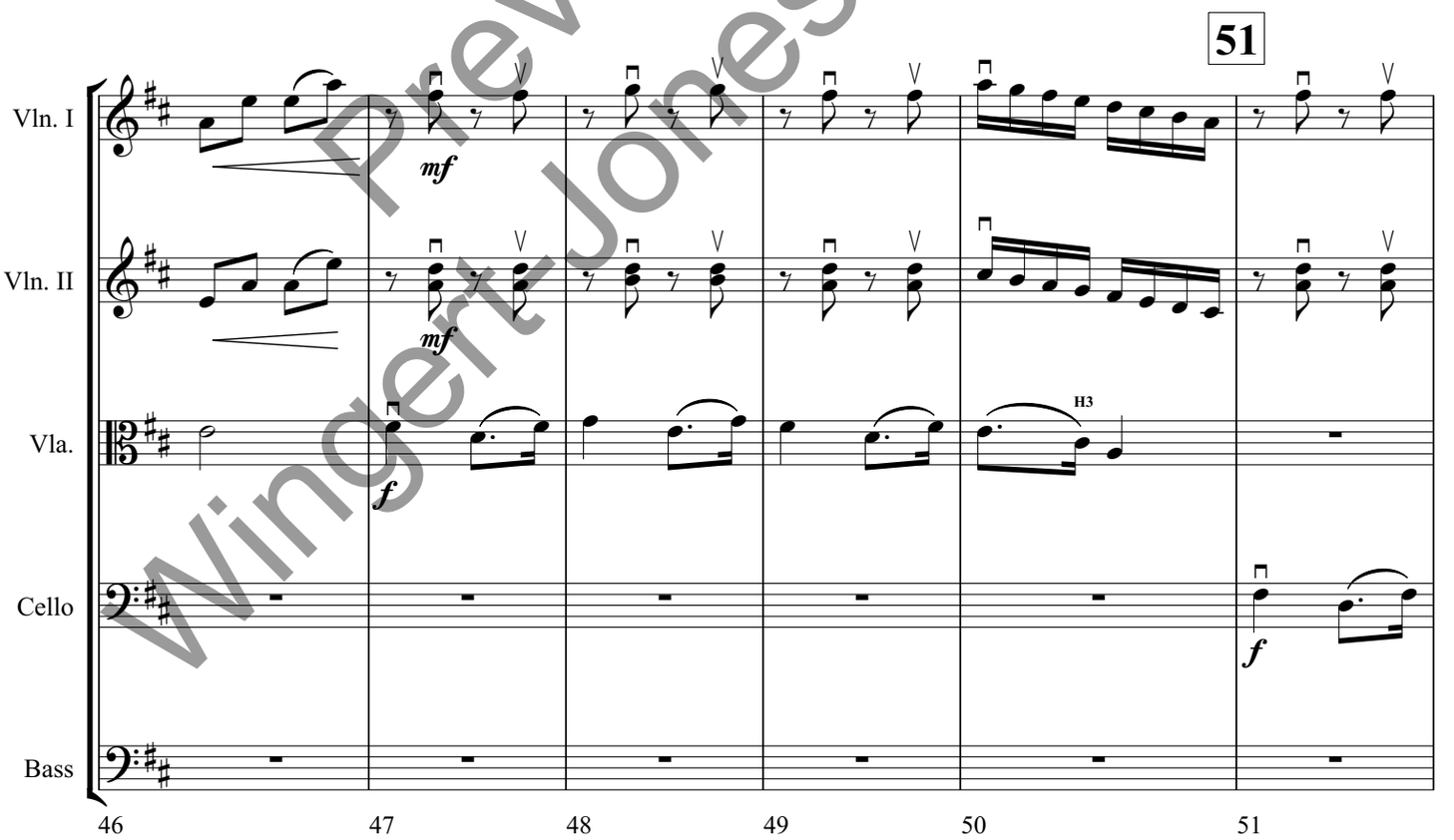

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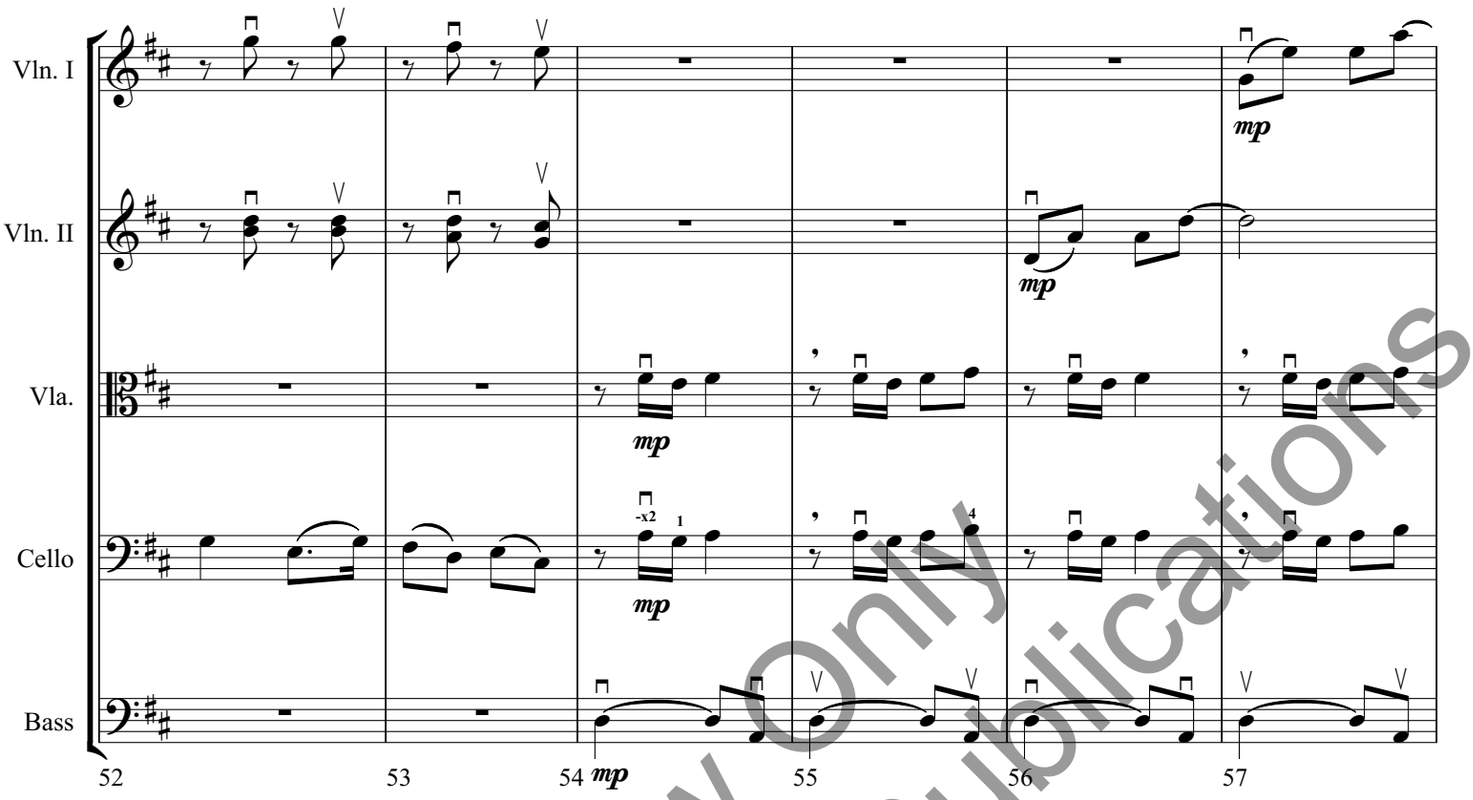

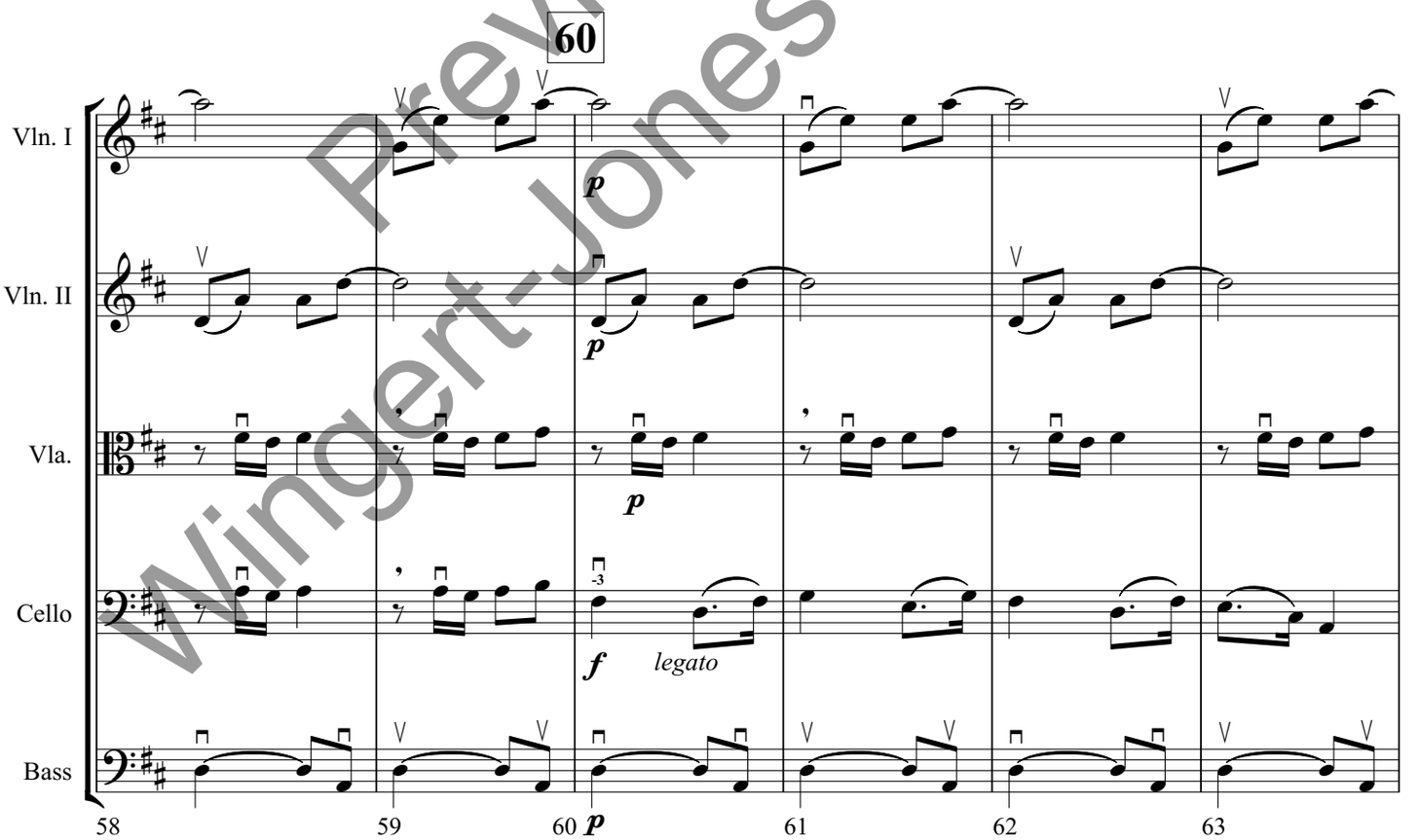

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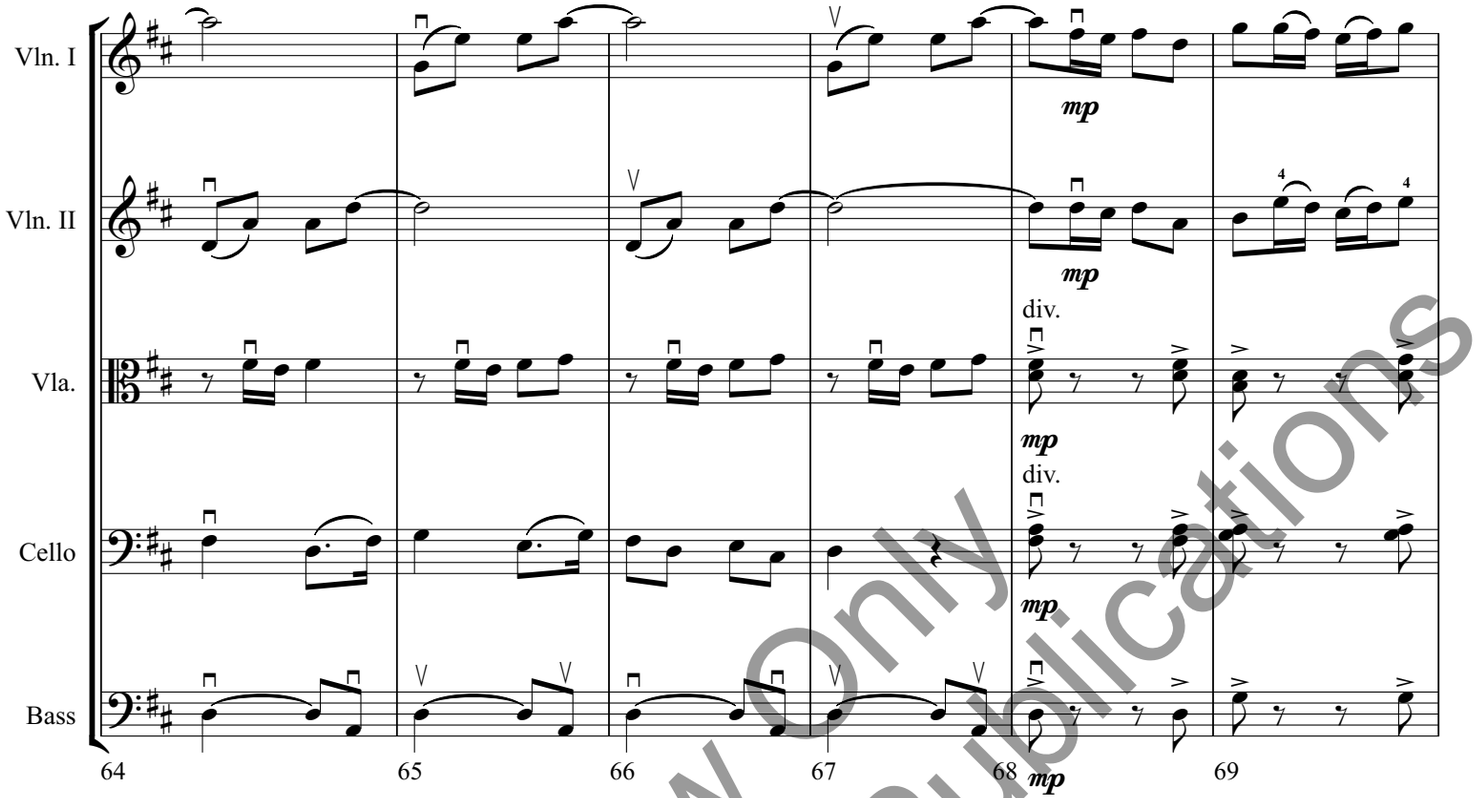

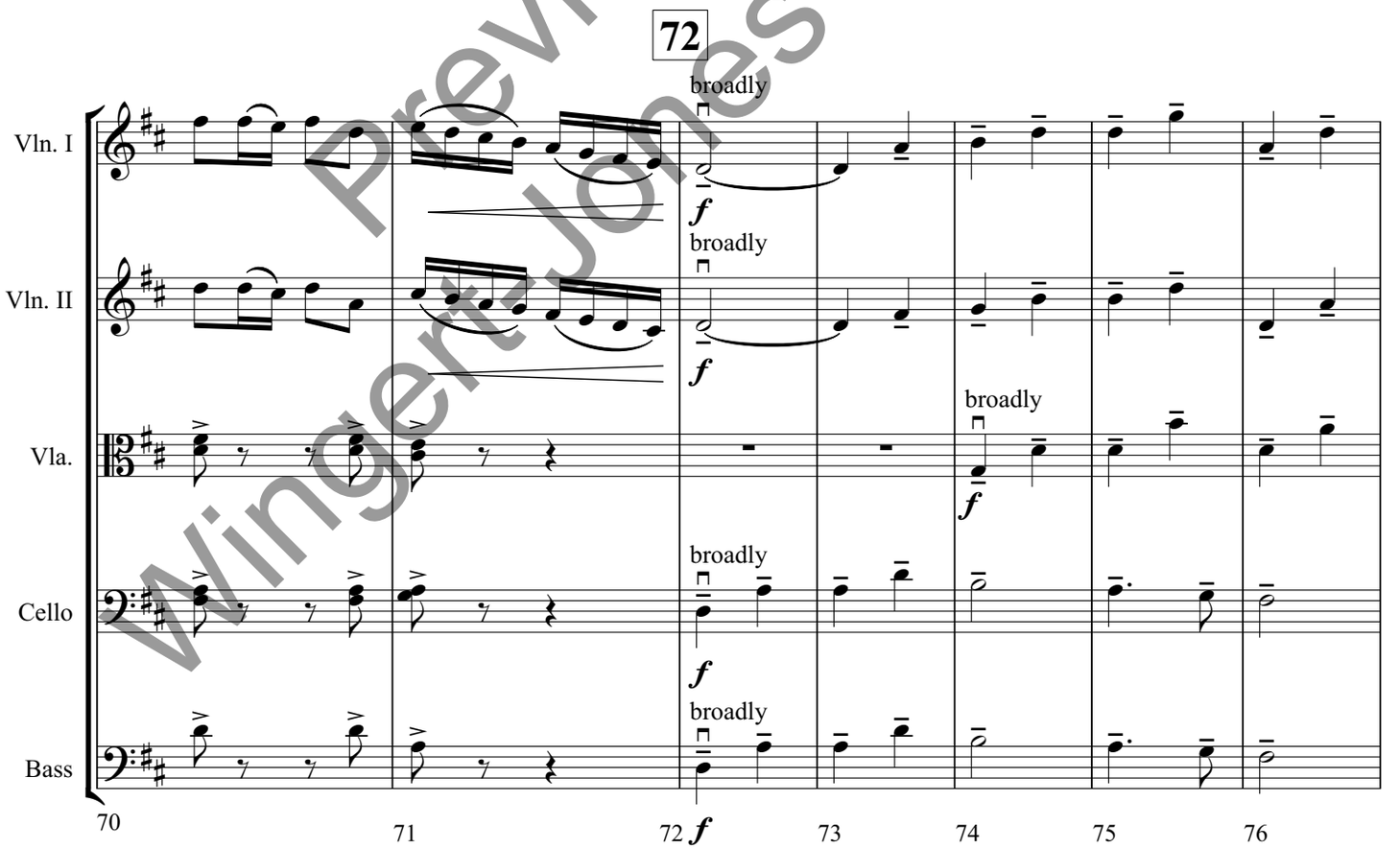

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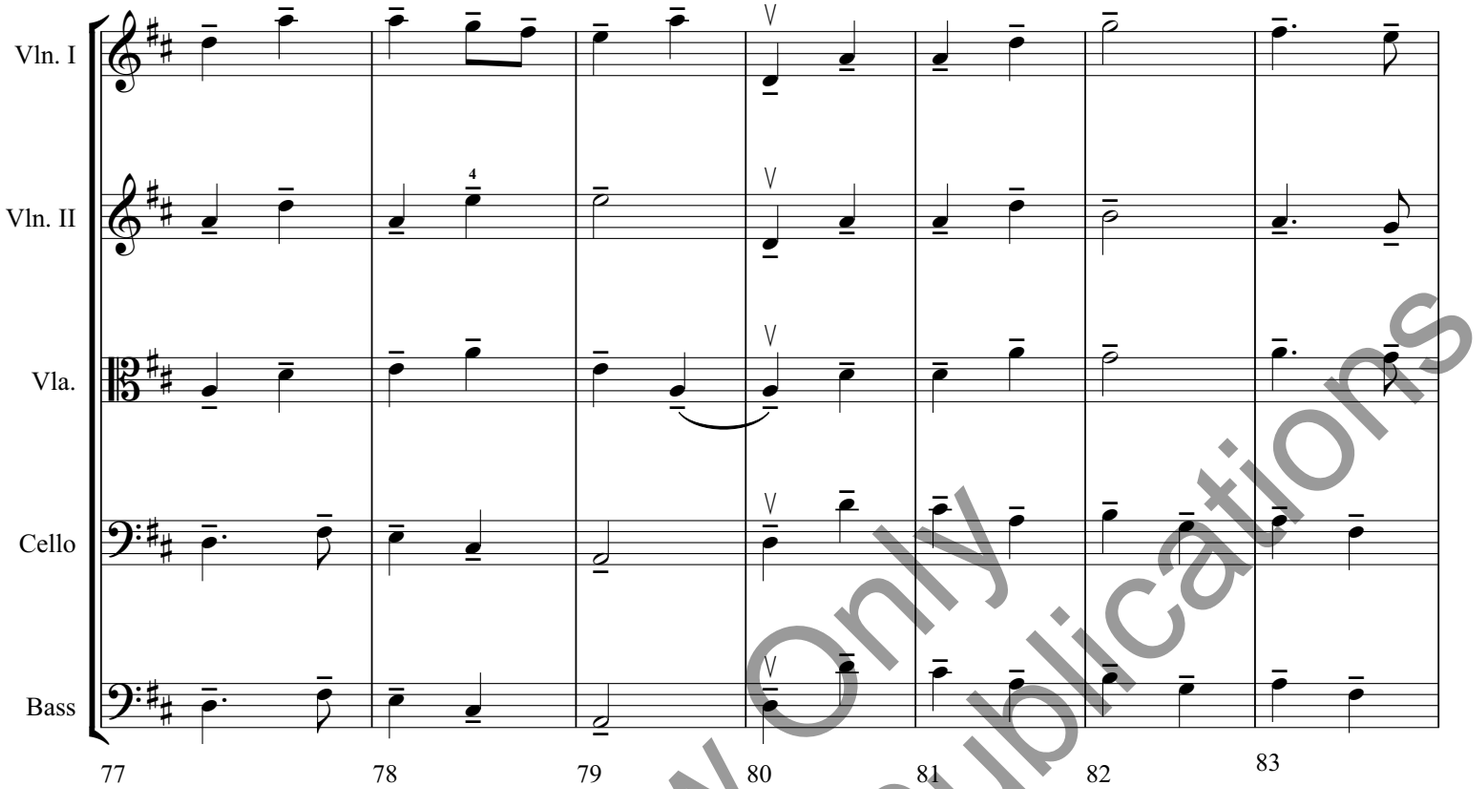

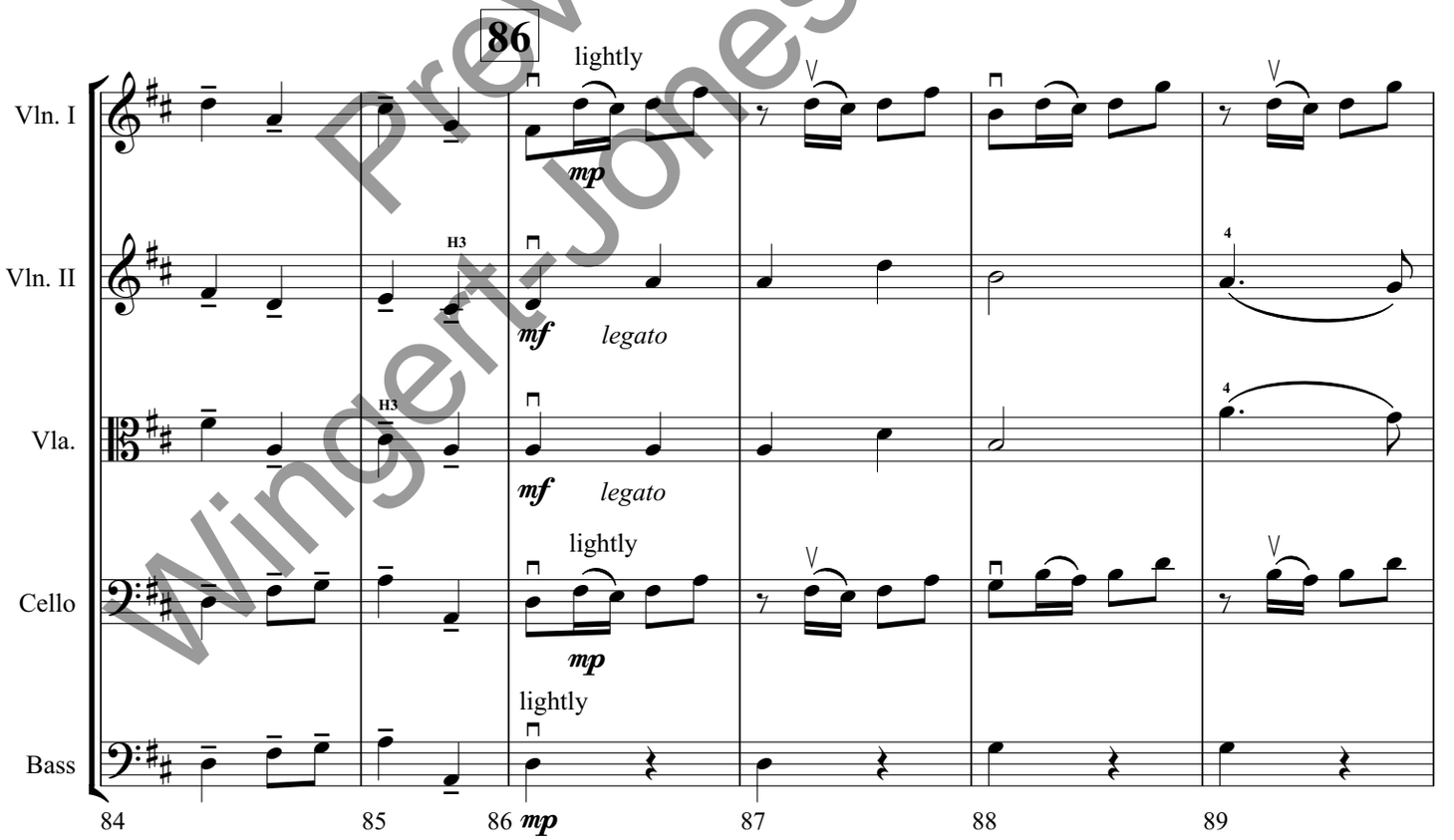

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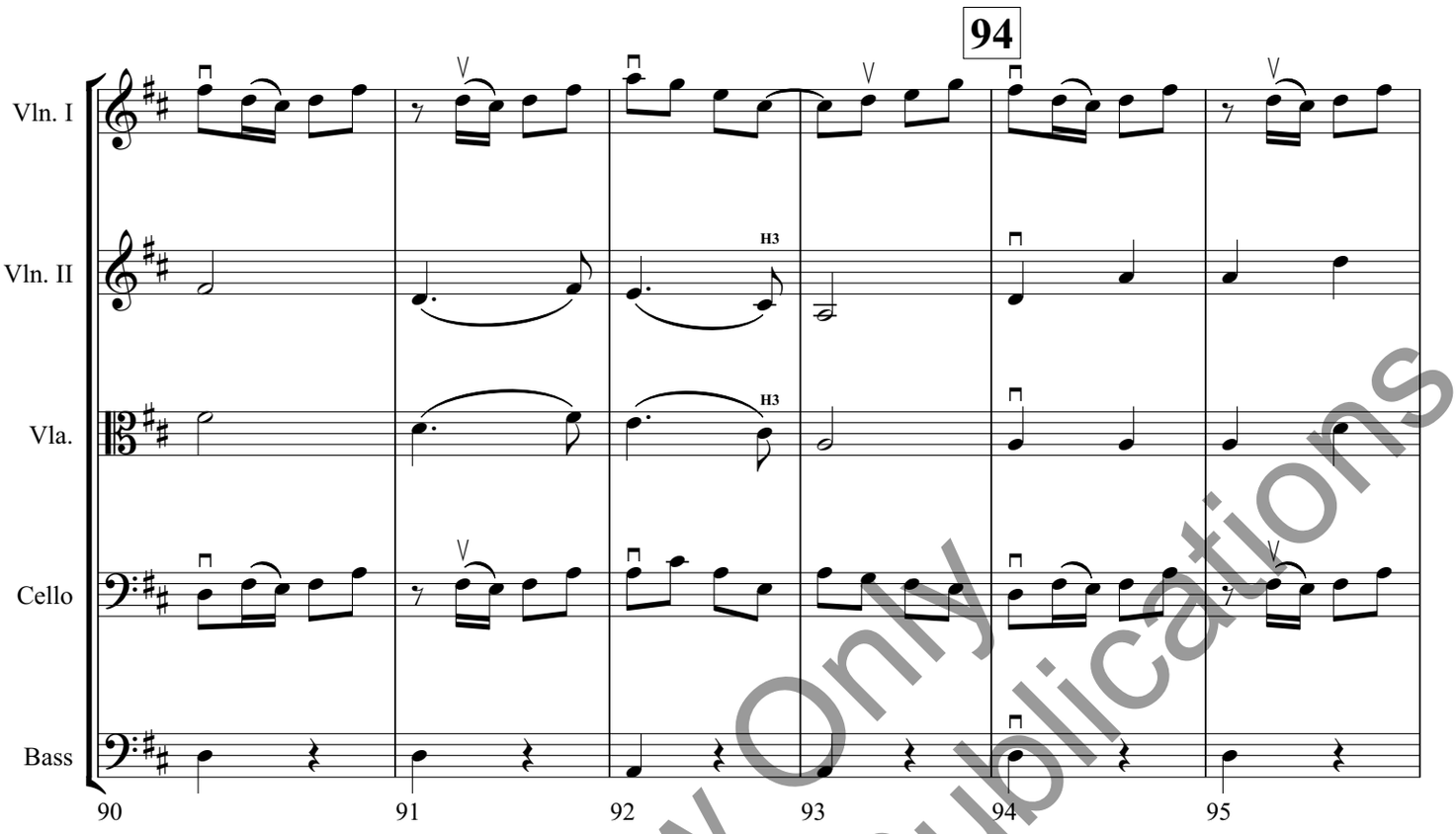

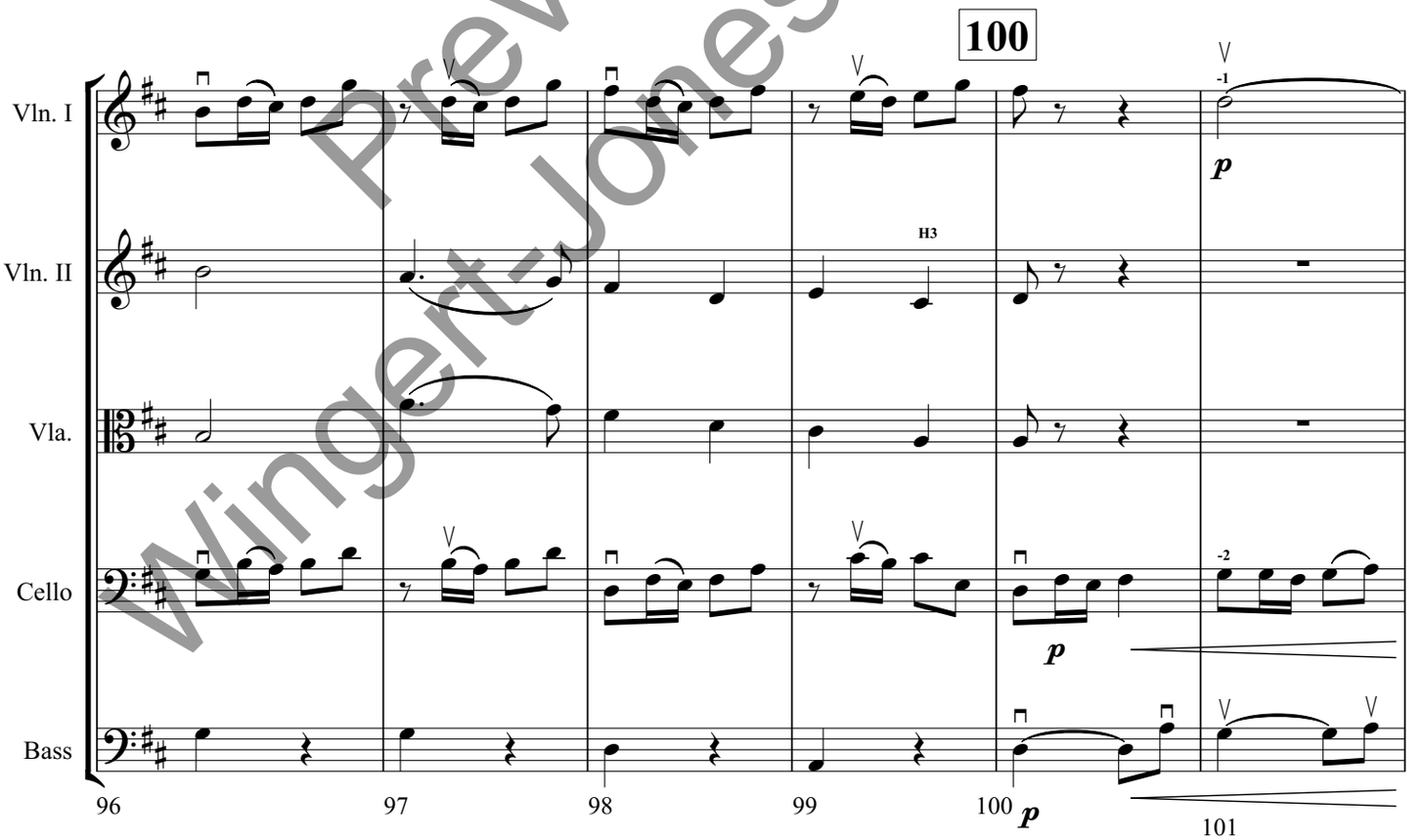

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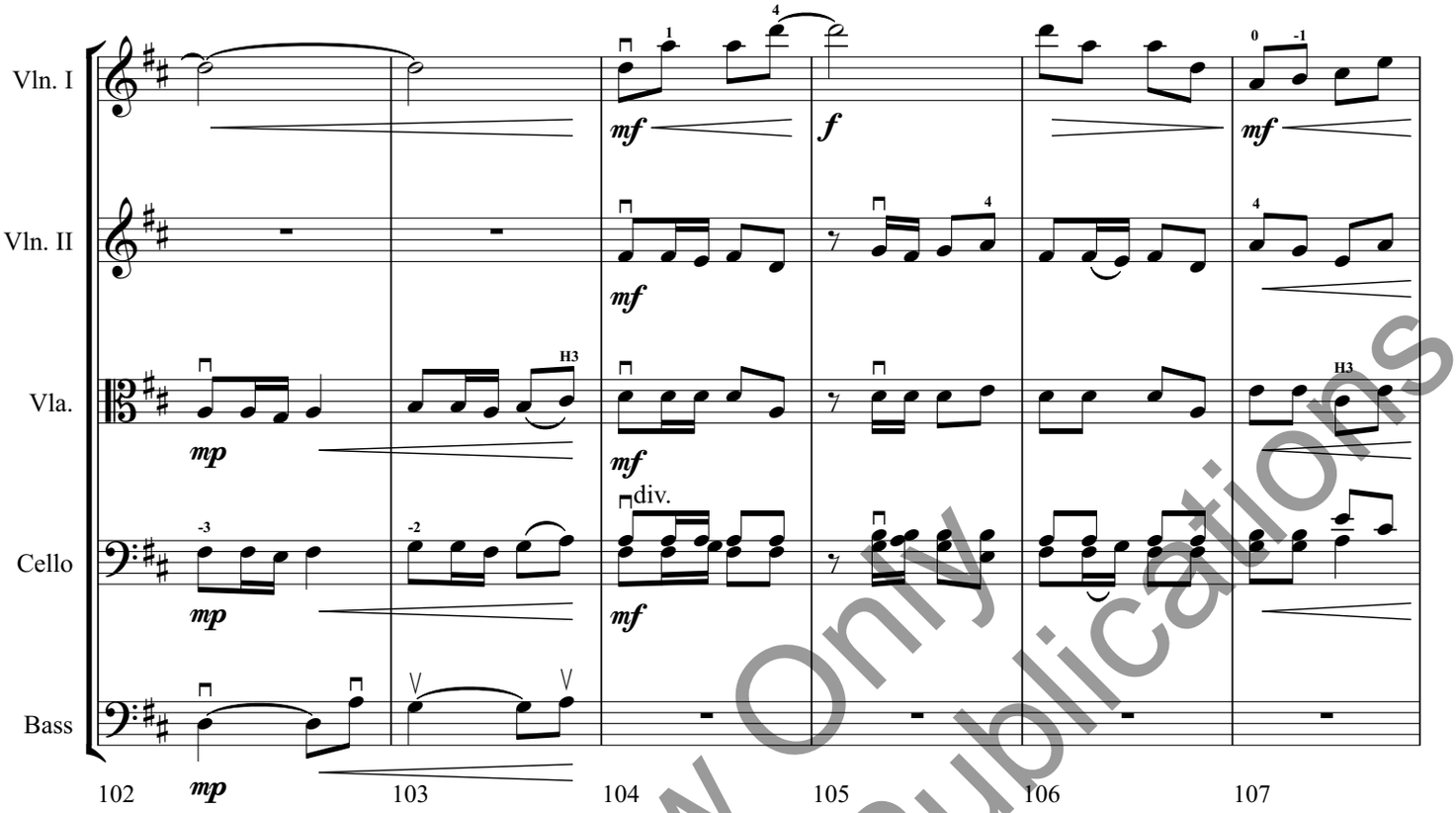

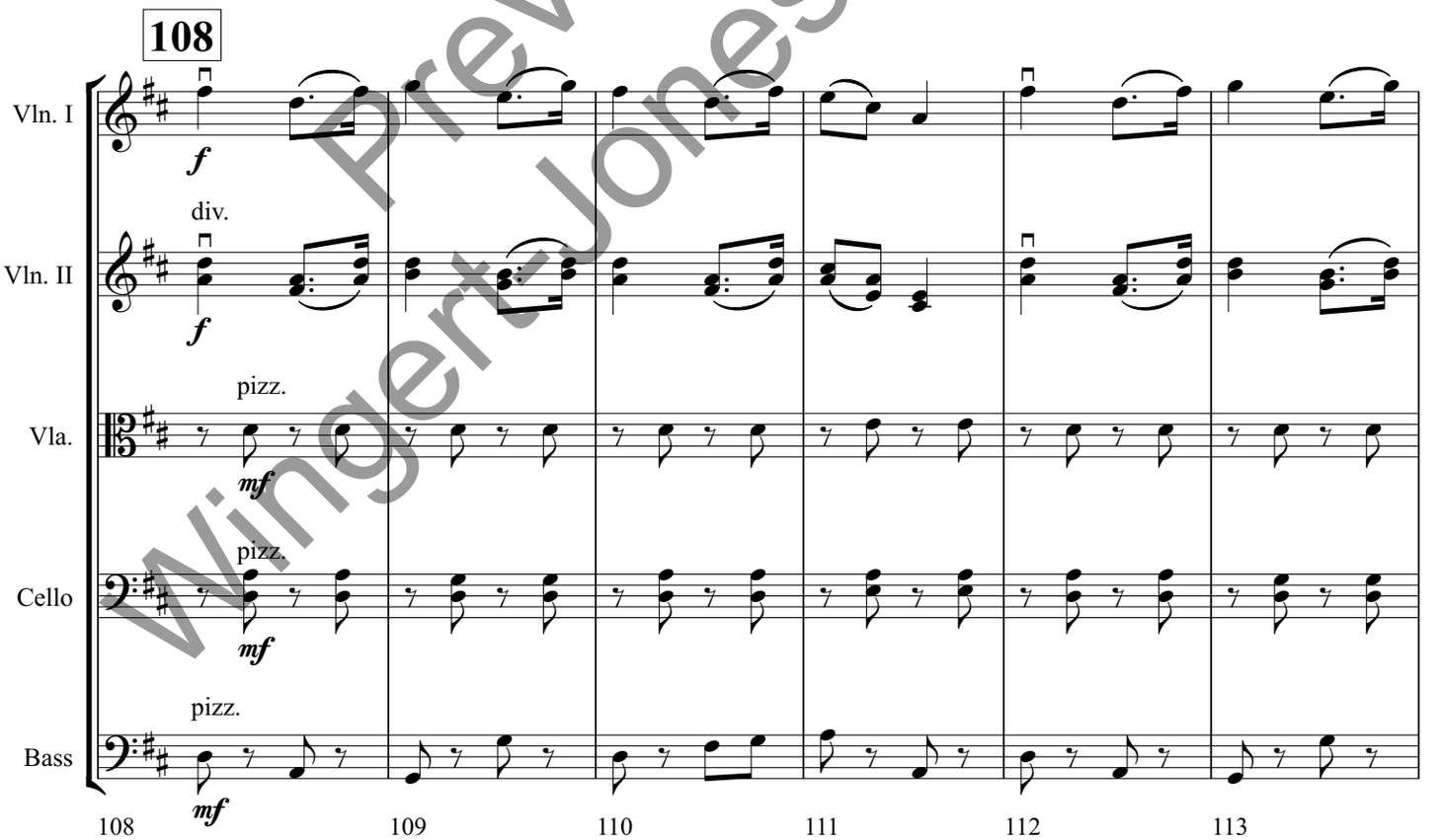

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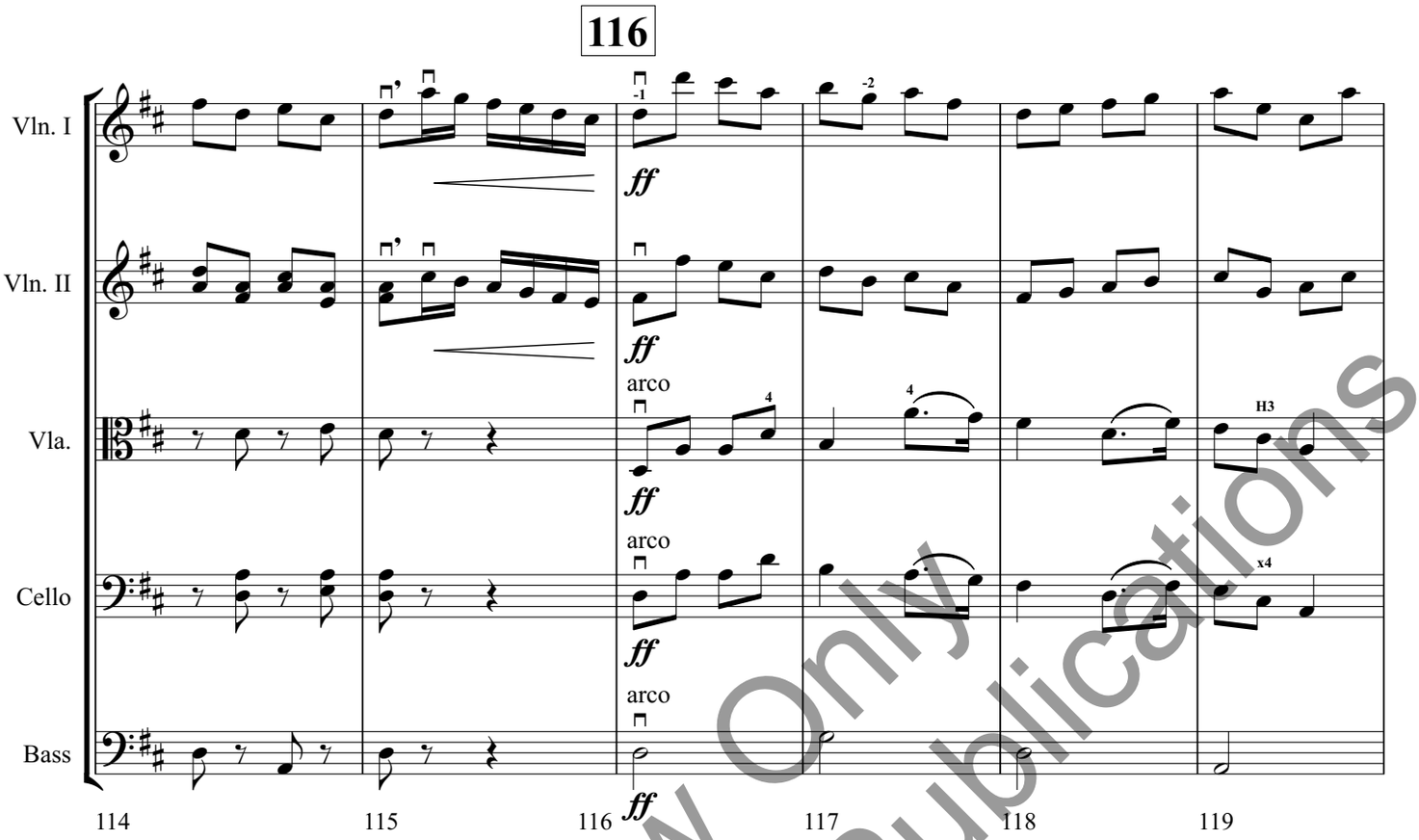

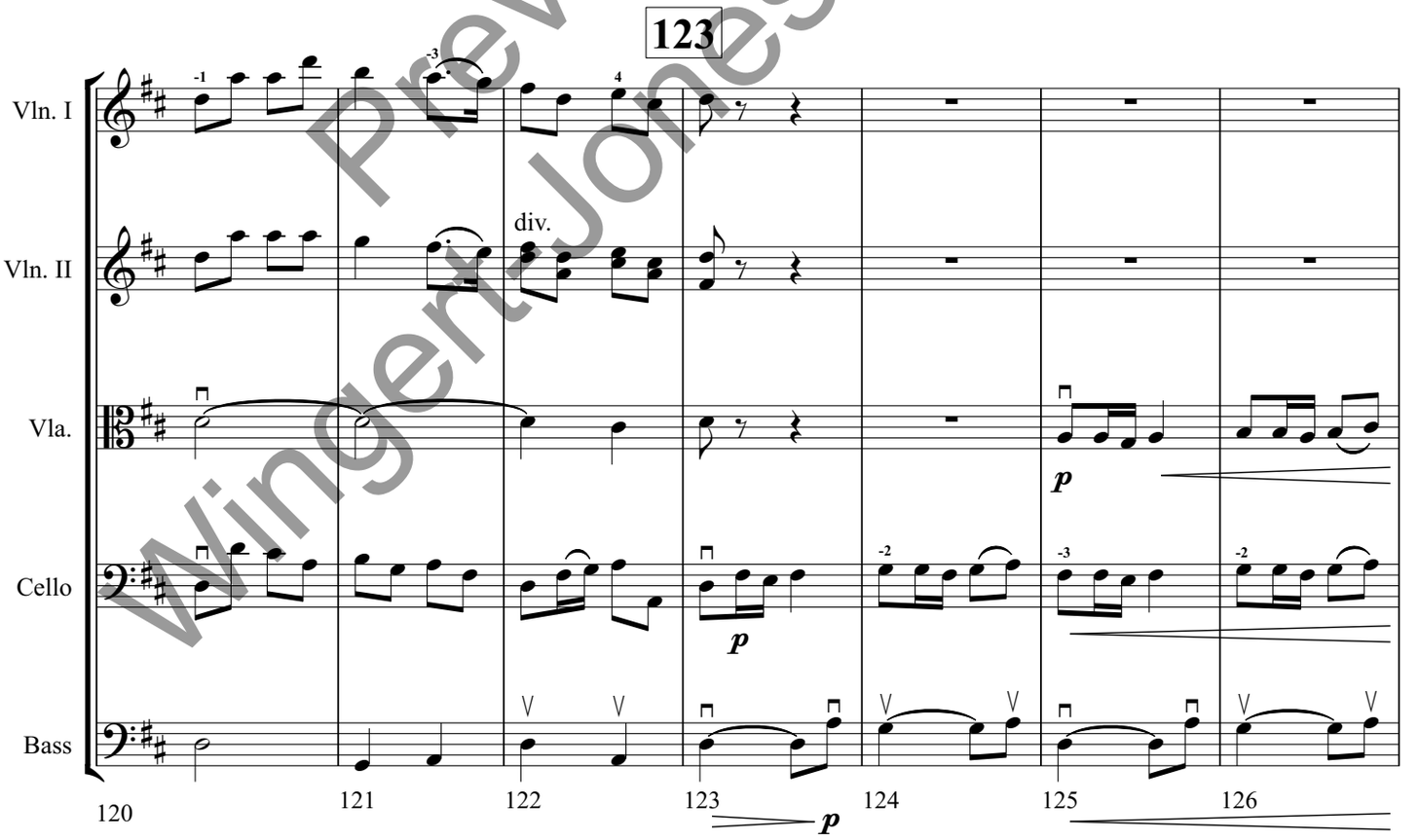

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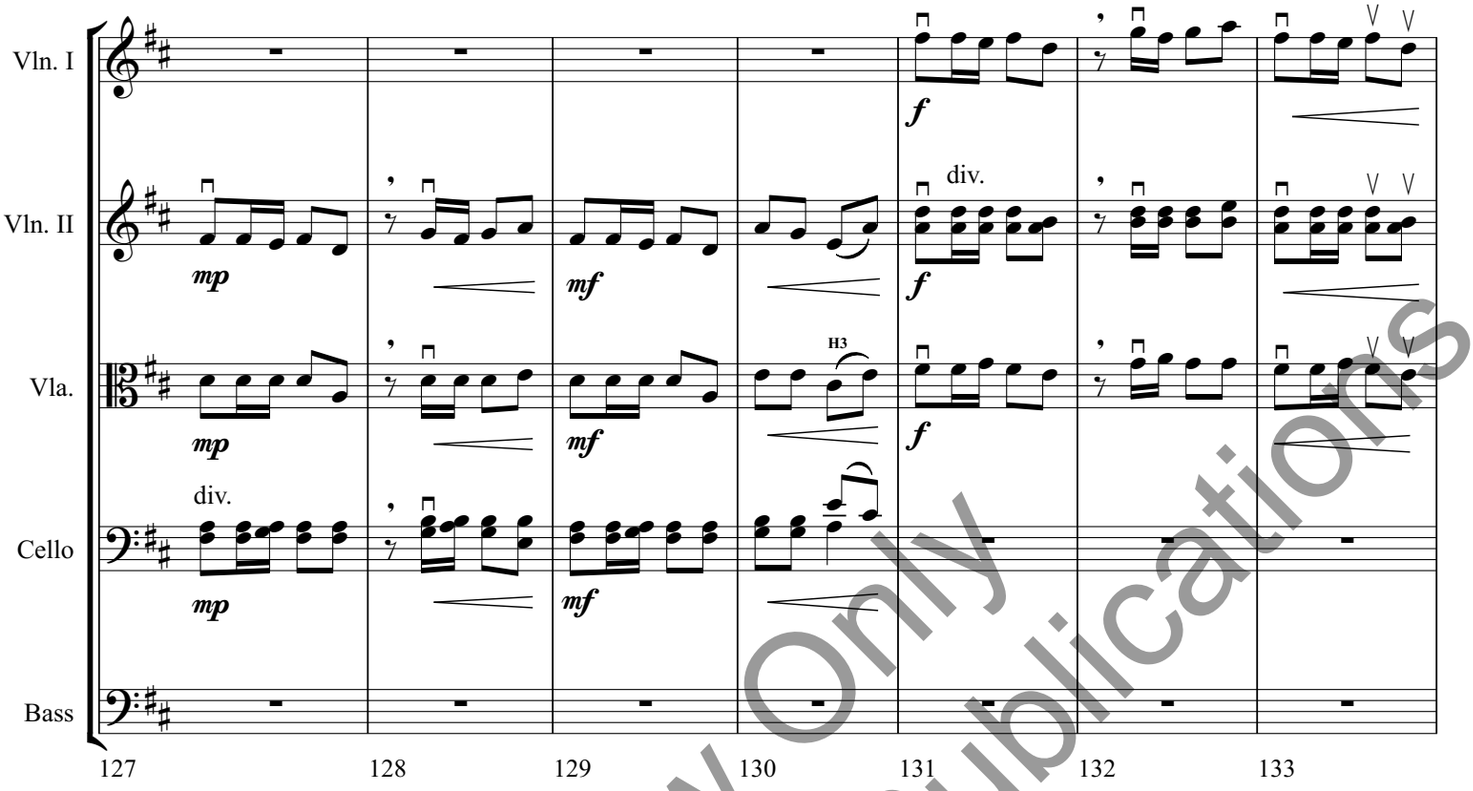

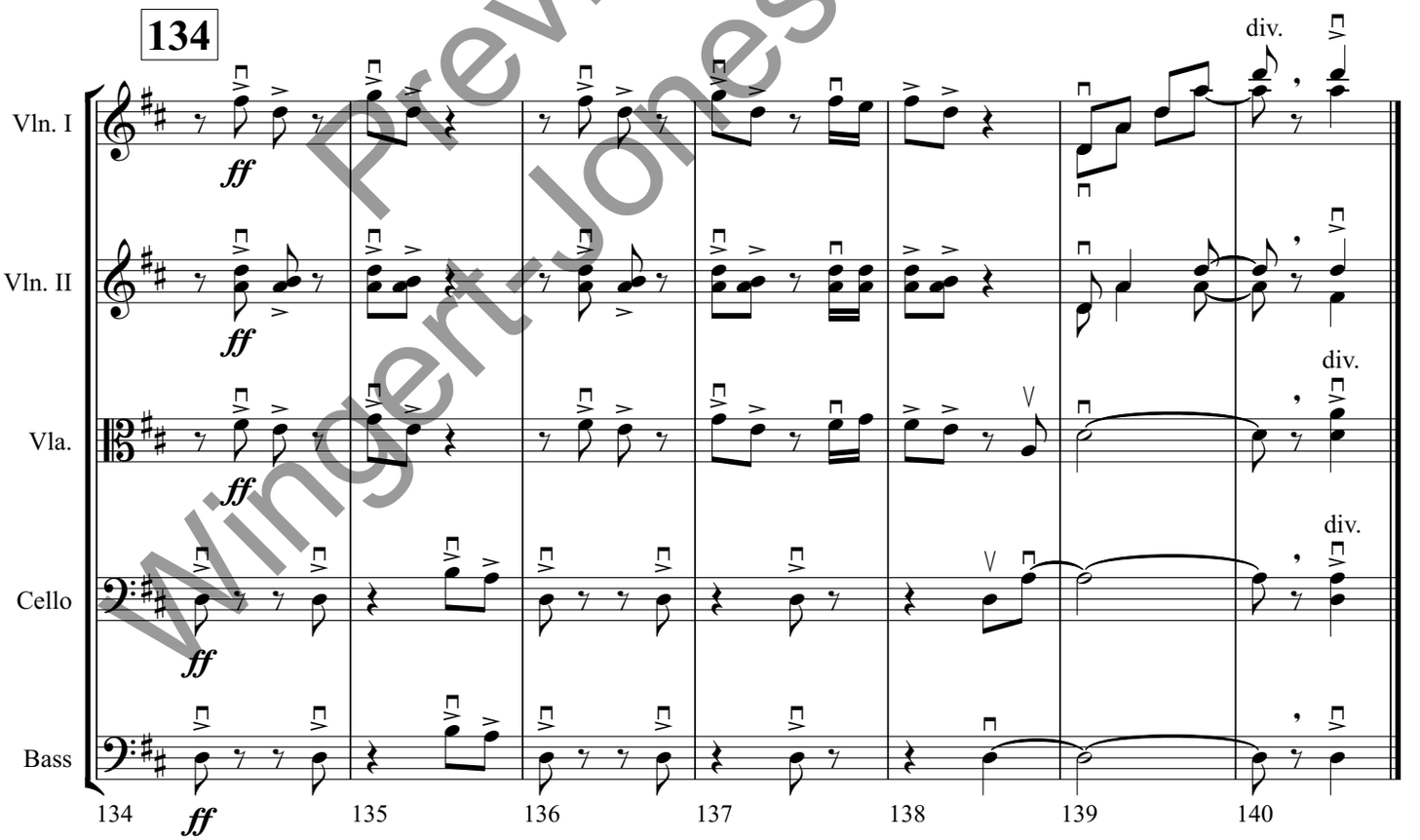

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